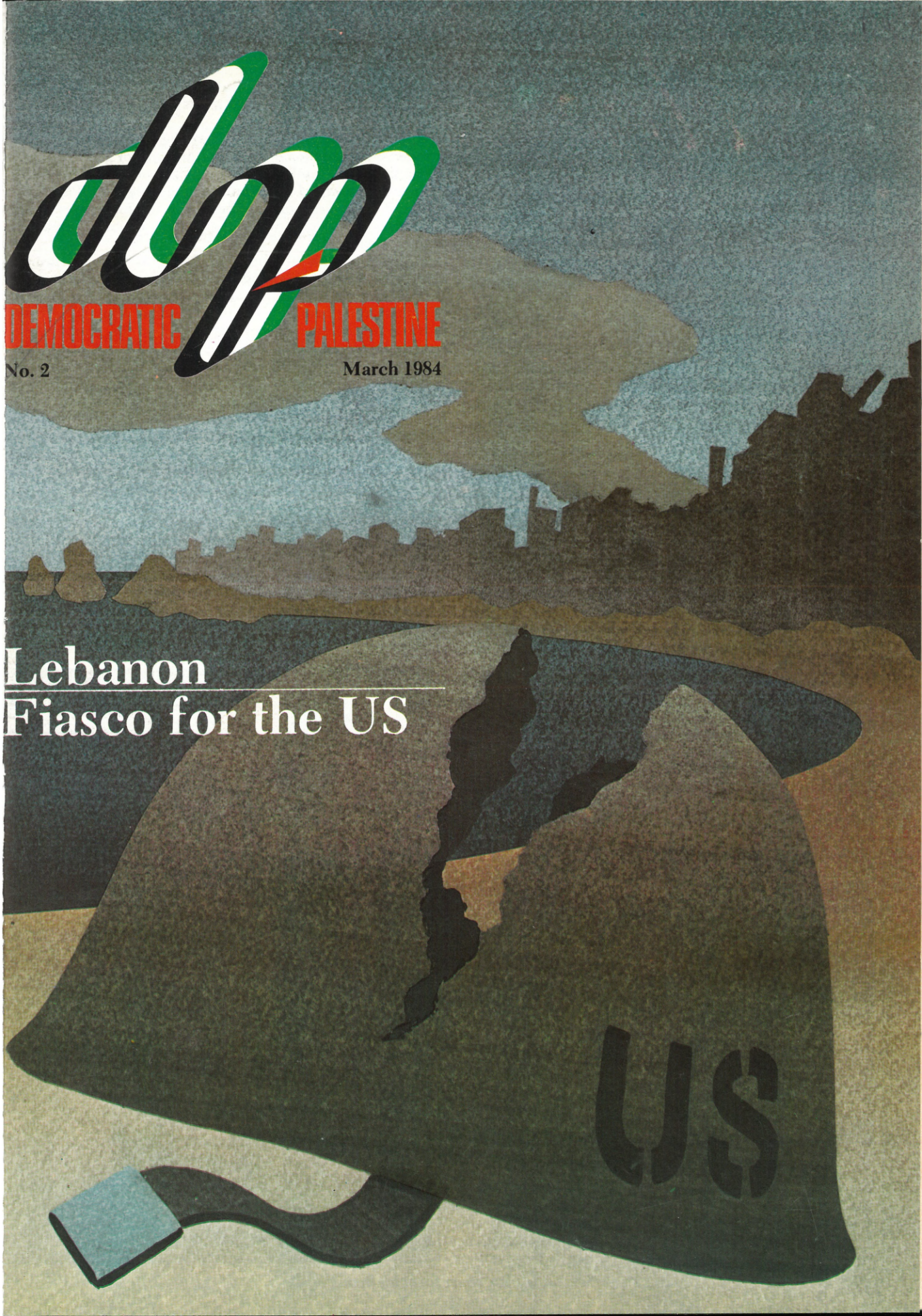
DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE
No. 2
March 1984
Lebanon
Fiasco for the US
US

Democratic Palestine is an English language magazine published by the PFLP. It replaces the *PFLP Bulletin*, which was published monthly from March 1979 until the 1982 Zionist invasion of Lebanon (issues no. 25-62) and bimonthly through November 1983 (no. 63-69).

By changing the name we wish to signal our intent to engage a broader section of progressive forces around the world in dialogue and relations of mutual solidarity that will strengthen the struggle for a democratic Palestine in the context of the global struggle against imperialism and its allies.

Democratic Palestine is published with the following aims:

— conveying the political line of the PFLP and other progressive Palestinian and Arab forces

— providing current information and analysis pertinent to the Palestinian liberation struggle, as well as developments on the Arab and international levels

— serving as a forum and instrument for building relations of mutual solidarity between the Palestinian revolution and progressive organizations, parties, national liberation movements and countries around the world.

You can support these aims by subscribing to *Democratic Palestine*. Furthermore, we hope that you will encourage friends and comrades to read and subscribe to *Democratic Palestine*. We also urge you to send us comments, criticisms and proposals concerning the magazine's contents.

The subscription fee for 12 issues is US$24. If you wish to subscribe, please fill out the subscription blank and mail to: Democratic Palestine, Box 12144, Damascus, Syria.

At the same time, please send the fee by check, money order or your bank to account no. 010-41-006222-06, Bank of Cyprus, Central Office, Nicosia, Cyprus.

Readers of the *PFLP Bulletin* who have confirmed their address with us will automatically receive *Democratic Palestine*. We now ask you to send the subscription fee as soon as possible.

Those who have received *PFLP Bulletin* in the past, but have not confirmed their address, should do so immediately and send the subscription fee in order to receive *Democratic Palestine*.

We are eager to exchange *Democratic Palestine* with other publications on the Middle East and/or anti-imperialist issues in general. Please send your publication to our post box, and you will automatically receive *Democratic Palestine*. Exchange agreements established for the *PFLP Bulletin* will continue to be honored.

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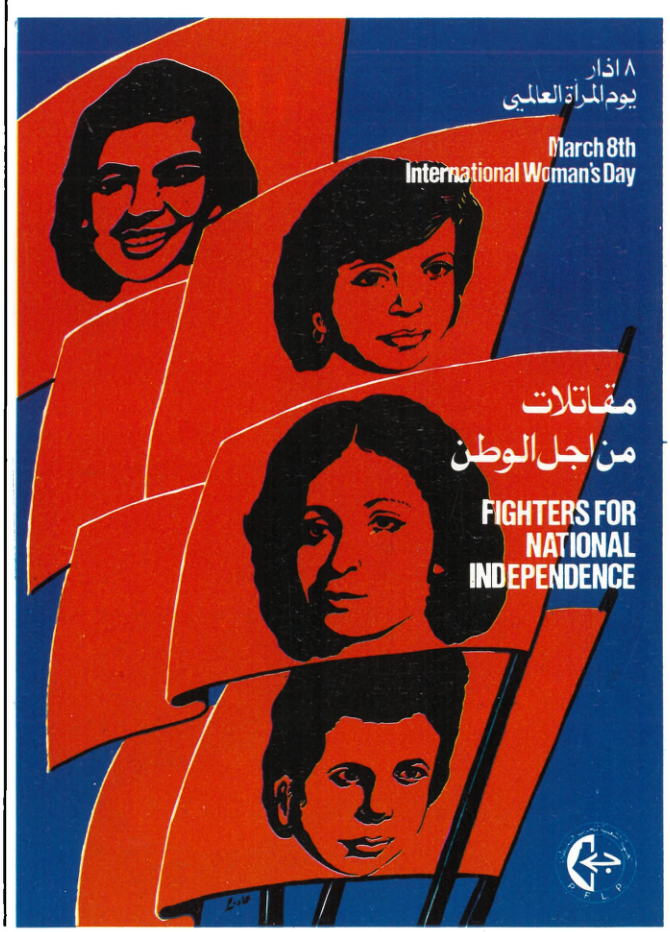
The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is a Marxist - Leninist organization and an integral component of the Palestine Liberation Organization. A primary motive for establishing the PFLP was to inject a clear class perspective in the Palestinian national liberation struggle. Experience shows that the most oppressed classes - the workers, peasants, sectors of the petit bourgeoisie, the camp Palestinians - are those most in contradiction with imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction. It is they who carve history with determination that can persevere in a protracted war against the enemy alliance.

The PFLP is deeply commited to the unity and independent, national decision - making of the Palestinian people and their sole, legitimate representative, the PLO. To this end, we work for strengthening the role of the Palestinian left, thereby accentuating the PLO's anti-imperialist line in common struggle with the Arab national liberation movement.

The process of liberating Palestine relies on radical, national democratic change or development in one or more of the surrounding Arab countries. This will provide the PLO with a strong base for liberating Palestine. Thus, the struggle for a democratic Palestine is linked to the creation of a united, democratic, and ultimately socialist, Arab society. This will provide the objective basis for eradicating the poverty, exploitation, oppression and the problem of minorities, from which the people of the area suffer.

As a cornerstone in this process, the establishment of a democratic, secular state in Palestine will provide a democratic solution for the Jewish question in this area, while simultaneously restoring the national rights of the Palestinian people. After liberation, Jews in Palestine, like all citizens, will enjoy equal rights and duties. The decision of the PLO to establish an independent Palestinian state on any liberated part of the national soil is a step in this direction. It is the sincere hope of all Palestinian revolutionaries that more and more Israelis will recognize that they too have become victims of Zionism's racism, expansionism, exploitation and militarism, and will join us in the struggle for a democratic Palestine.



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This issue was sent to press March 2, 1984.

Letters

In the recent period, we have received a number of letters from friends in different parts of the world, expressing appreciation of our magazine, as well as solidarity with the PLO and the Palestinian revolution at this critical stage. Many have expressed their support for the unity efforts between PFLP and DFLP, and for the Joint Leadership's common position on the means for resolving the internal crisis in the PLO. We hereby extend our thanks to all those who have written, and in particular to the members of the Palestine Solidarity Committee in Tasmania, Australia, who sent the following message to the Joint Leadership on January 15th:

PALESTINE SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE
AUSTRALIAN SUPPORTERS OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION - TASMANIA
P.O.Box 85,
LINDISFARNE,
HOBART,
TASMANIA,
AUSTRALIA 7015

To the Joint Leadership of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine:

Dear Comrades,

It is with great pleasure and deep interest that we, the Palestine Solidarity Committee of Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, have read your Program for Unity and Democratic Reform in the P.L.O. as published in the P.F.L.P. Bulletin no. 69, 1983. We applaud the careful and valid evaluation of the problems besetting the P.L.O. and are encouraged by your responsible attitudes and policies. We are confident that consideration of this document will begin the objective processes of re-evaluation that will result in not only a resolution of the critical stage of the P.L.O. but the emergence of a unified, democratic and infinitely stronger Revolution that will surpass the already remarkable achievements of the P.L.O. The unity of the P.L.O. is vital to the continuation of the struggle and to its role in the vanguard of Liberation Movements throughout the world, and we express our conviction that unity will be achieved and the Revolution will result in the return of Palestine and the defeat of the Zionist enemy. We express our high appreciation of your efforts and affirm our total solidarity with your revolutionary path.

With our sincere best wishes,

John Armstrong,
Chairman,

Editorial

The struggle against the US-Israeli plans will continue

President Amin Gemayel has decided to unilaterally abrogate the May 17th agreement which was signed between Lebanon and 'Israel' in the aftermath of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. It has also been announced that a conference will be held in Switzerland to discuss the deep differences separating the regime-Phalangist camp from the National Salvation Front-Amal camp.

These developments raise questions on the future of Lebanon: Will there be a reconciliation? Will the civil war stop? What will be the US and Israeli reaction to Gemayel's step?

Why the change?

Since the US-Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the fascists, led by the Phalangists, have been counting on the possibility of completely controlling Lebanon. This means, of course, the total destruction of the Lebanese nationalist forces, and ousting the Syrian and PLO forces from Lebanon. These calculations remain in the Baabda Presidential Palace, but now in a more discrete manner, after the Lebanese nationalist forces scored important victories in the past two months.

The immediate byproduct of the nationalist forces' gaining full control of West Beirut was the division of the Lebanese Army, which both the regime and the US had considered to be an unbreakably unified institution. Also, strategic positions of the army and the fascists in the mountains were taken by the nationalist forces, pushing the army and Phalangist units to withdraw and head southwards. The nationalist forces' offensive continued to the perimeter of the fascist-controlled areas and Souq al Gharb, where the US had drawn a red line. At this point, a dramatic change took place: Amin Gemayel decided to cancel the May 17th agreement. To this purpose, a visit to Damascus was arranged.

The background for Gemayel's decision and visit is complicated and can be summarized as follows:

(a) Gemayel's army suffered several blows, the most serious being the split in its ranks.

(b) The US administration came under strong internal pressure against the presence of the Marines in Beirut. This, and the fact that losses in their ranks increased, forced Reagan to pull the Marines out, thus depriving the Lebanese regime of a major supportive factor.

(c) Phalangist Sami Maroun had visited 'Israel', together with Wadi Haddad, Gemayel's national security advisor, in order to ask for help. The answer was negative.

(d) In the meantime, Jean Obeid, Gemayel's advisor on political affairs, was discussing with the Syrian Foreign Minister, Khaddam, the possibility of a reconciliation between Damascus and Baabda.

Gemayel realized that there was no way to save his presidency other than to cancel the agreement, in order to pave the way for reconciliation with the nationalist forces.

In Damascus, Gemayel discussed in detail with Syrian President Assad the necessary conditions for cancelling the May 17th agreement. According to informed sources, these conditions were: (a) the basis for the reconciliation conference in Switzerland, (b) what guarantees Lebanon can give 'Israel', (c) Syrian-Lebanese relations.

The Damascus summit was a serious change in the course charted by the intense fighting in Lebanon, but will this meeting prepare for a solution in Lebanon?

What next for Lebanon?

The internal contradictions in Lebanon are too complicated to be solved quickly. Moreover, the Lebanese crisis cannot be isolated from the Middle East conflict.

The tripartite alliance (Syria, the PLO and the Lebanese nationalist forces) has been fighting the US-Israeli plans in Lebanon, which the US wanted to make into the bridge for Camp David to the Eastern Front. In the wake of the recent battles, this plan has collapsed, yet the US is not at a deadend, for the Reagan Administration is betting on the Egyptian-Jordanian lever to push its plans into the Eastern Front. In this context, the talks between Arafat and King Hussein are regarded as extremely important.

Syria, and the PLO forces that oppose Arafat's political line, realize that the battle is still open in Lebanon. South Lebanon is still occupied by the Israelis, who take their own measures to protect their "borders" Moreover, the Lebanese nationalist forces cannot be sure of the extent to which Gemayel is ready to compromise in the Switzerland conference. Thus, Lebanon will remain a battlefield in the foreseeable future. The resistance to the Israeli occupation will continue in the South. The struggle of the Lebanese nationalist forces for their rights will continue. Above all, Syria, the PLO and the Lebanese nationalist and progressive forces will continue to struggle against the US-Israeli plans for the Middle East. ●

Marines beat a retreat to the warships

PFLP - DFLP Warn Defeatists

PFLP—DFLP Joint Leadership statement on recent developments in the occupied territories issued January 29, 1984: We warn the defeatist elements about departing from the national consensus.

In recent days, the Israeli occupation authorities have started feverish activities in the occupied territories. With these actions, they aim to weaken the overall national boycott of the civil administration. Further, they aim to appoint alternatives to the elected mayors, and form committees of rightist, vacillating and defeatist elements to administer the municipal councils, which were tyrannically cancelled over the past two years.

These activities are taking place through a variety of channels and in coordination with the Jordanian authorities and their helpers in the occupied territories. US support is also involved through what is called the project for economic advancement and development. These activities are going on under slogans of "concern" for facilitating and serving the daily interests of the population. Our people are being 'advised' that continuing the national boycott of civil administration, and the strike of the municipal workers and employees, is useless.

These activities go hand in hand with the rapid Jordanian steps aiming to strengthen ties with the occupied territories, and assert Jordan's responsibility for the future of these territories, at the expense of the PLO and the right of the Palestinian people to return, self-determination and an independent national state. All this is in preparation for convening a conference in Amman for the representatives of the municipal councils in the West Bank and Jordan.

Based on national commitment and an understanding of the dangers of these activities, the Joint Leadership of PFLP and DFLP held a meeting to study the situation in the occupied territories, and concluded the following:

1. We salute all nationalist forces, bodies, institutions and personalities in the occupied territories, that continue to decisively oppose all attempts to violate the national consensus of our Palestinian people. The Joint Leadership calls on these forces and bodies to unite their ranks to confront the new Israeli-Jordanian maneuvers, to abort them and prevent the handful of defeatist, collaborating elements from being drawn into these maneuvers, as a prelude to participating in the 'autonomy' plan and the Jordanian annexationist plans.

2. We call upon all Palestinian forces, bodies, institutions and popular organizations, inside and outside the occupied homeland, to combat these moves and expose their liquidationist objectives; to declare firm adherence to the elected municipal councils and mayors, in the forefront the militants Bassam Shakaa and Karim Khalaf, and the other nationalist mayors who are sincere to their people's cause and homeland; to reject all attempts to cooperate with the apparatus of the Israeli civil administration and continue the boycott.

3. We call on the PLO, and the institutions concerned with the affairs of the occupied territories, to adhere to the national consensus, as maintained in its resolutions, in particular the resolutions of the Palestinian National Council, the Executive Committee and the Supreme Council of the Occupied Homeland Department. This is necessary in order to take united and active measures to abort the Israeli-Jordanian moves.

While affirming our decisive stand confronting the Israeli-Jordanian moves, we salute our people in the occupied territories who rally around the PLO in facing the projects of the occupation and the Jordanian annexationist plans. The Joint Leadership warns the defeatist elements in the occupied homeland who are attempting to take advantage of the critical period facing the revolution. They have exposed their real position by declaring their intention to join in the plans of the occupation and the Jordanian authorities. The people will takes measures to punish all those renegades who violate the national consensus. ●

Military Operations

Revolutionary violence, practiced in concordance with a clear political line, is an essential component of the Palestinian national liberation struggle. Military operations against the Zionist enemy are our legitimate response to the occupation of our homeland, Palestine. They are our masses' answer to the daily violence of the enemy. The historical examples of victorious liberation movements prove that revolutionary violence is the only way to resolve the contradiction between the masses and the enemy, in our case, imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction.

The military operations carried out in occupied Palestine are an essential and integral part of our strategy of protracted people's war.

The ability of our revolution to carry out military operations today is in itself a victory for the Palestinian cause. Each operation refutes the Zionist claim of having destroyed the PLO in the barbaric invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982.

A PFLP spokesman declared that military units of the Front in the occupied homeland had carried out two military operations against the Zionist occupation forces on February 21st:

— PFLP militants ambushed a Zionist military patrol in the city of Gaza. As the patrol was passing, they attacked it with fire bombs, killing or wounding a number of the Zionist soldiers. The PFLP unit returned safely to base.

— A time bomb exploded in Gaza, causing several Israeli casualties. Israeli ambulances arrived at the scene to take the killed and wounded away.

The Israeli radio acknowledged both operations, but as usual, played down the number of casualties.

In the occupied territories, 1984 was ushered in with five different fire bomb and two grenade attacks against the occupying army in the space of a few days. These attacks have continued, culminating in the large operation in Jerusalem on February 28th, when two grenades exploded on a main street. The Zionists admitted 20 casualties.

Also, Palestinian freedom fighters showed their repugnance for Gaza mayor, Rashed Shawwa, after he publicly advocated Palestinian cooperation with the Egyptian and Jordanian regimes; a bomb exploded at the entrance to his home on New Year's Eve.

Arab Councils Threaten Strike

In January, Israeli Prime Minister Shamir invited all Palestinian Arab mayors and heads of local councils to meet under the pretext of discussing their problems. Out of a total of 55 councils, only 15 responded to the invitation. The majority decided to boycott the meeting, protesting Shamir's circumvention of the elected regional committee of local Arab councils.

Shamir's move came as the financial crisis confronting the Arab municipalities and local councils had reached a peak. The historical discrimination against Arab communities, as compared to the generous funding accorded Jewish ones, has been greatly aggravated by the new austerity measures adopted by the Likud government. The budget deficit of the local Arab councils now exceeds 100 million shekels.

Shamir's move also coincides with escalation of the Israeli authorities' repression against the Palestinians of the Galilee, Triangle and Naqab. More arrests are taking place. More suppressive measures are imposed in order to force Palestinians to emigrate and to distort their national identity. To counter the growth of the progressive nationalist trend in 1948 occupied Palestine, the Israeli authorities have enacted a concerted attack against the municipal councils in the Palestinian Arab cities and villages, including harassment, new laws, increased taxes, and other political and economic pressure. This aims to weaken the mayors and council heads and make them appear incapable of running the municipalities and meeting the population's needs, in order to reassert the hegemony of the Zionist parties.

In this context, Shamir took an unprecedented measure by meeting with a group of Palestinian Arab leaders. Begin, in contrast, never visited the Arab communities while in power. Though professing "concern" for the Palestinian population's needs, the real intent of Shamir's initiative was: first, to split the unity of the Palestinians under occupation; second, to weaken and hopefully erase the progressive nationalist sentiment among them; third, to fuel tribal and sectarian differences among Palestinians, which would facilitate the implementation of the racist Israeli policies; and finally, to overstep the regional committee of the councils.

Shamir's initiative was designed as a cover for the Israeli government's further moves to tighten the rope, financially speaking, on the local Arab councils. The Ministry of Interior intends to delay approving the councils' budgets for the 1984 fiscal year. Instead of funding the budget, the ministry will make monthly payments based on last year's budget, without taking into account rising prices and inflation, which has greatly affected the councils' budgets. Due to non-approval of their budgets, the councils are suffering a great shortage in specific budgets. They are unable to meet the minimum expenses for development projects and services. Moreover, they are unable to cover basic need in fields such as education, which might lead to the closure of schools. In the meantime, the councils are being forced to take bank loans, with interest to be paid from their budget, in order to solve problems that have been accumulating, such as paying teachers' salaries and purchasing necessities. Obviously, this enforced practice will only accumulate budget problems in the future, leaving the councils in an impossible situation.

The Ministry of Interior, if it approves the budget at all, intends to make several cuts. Furthermore, there are clear indications that the budget for development, as well as government scholarships, will be cancelled altogether. Inevitably, the standard of living of Palestinian Arab residents will suffer.

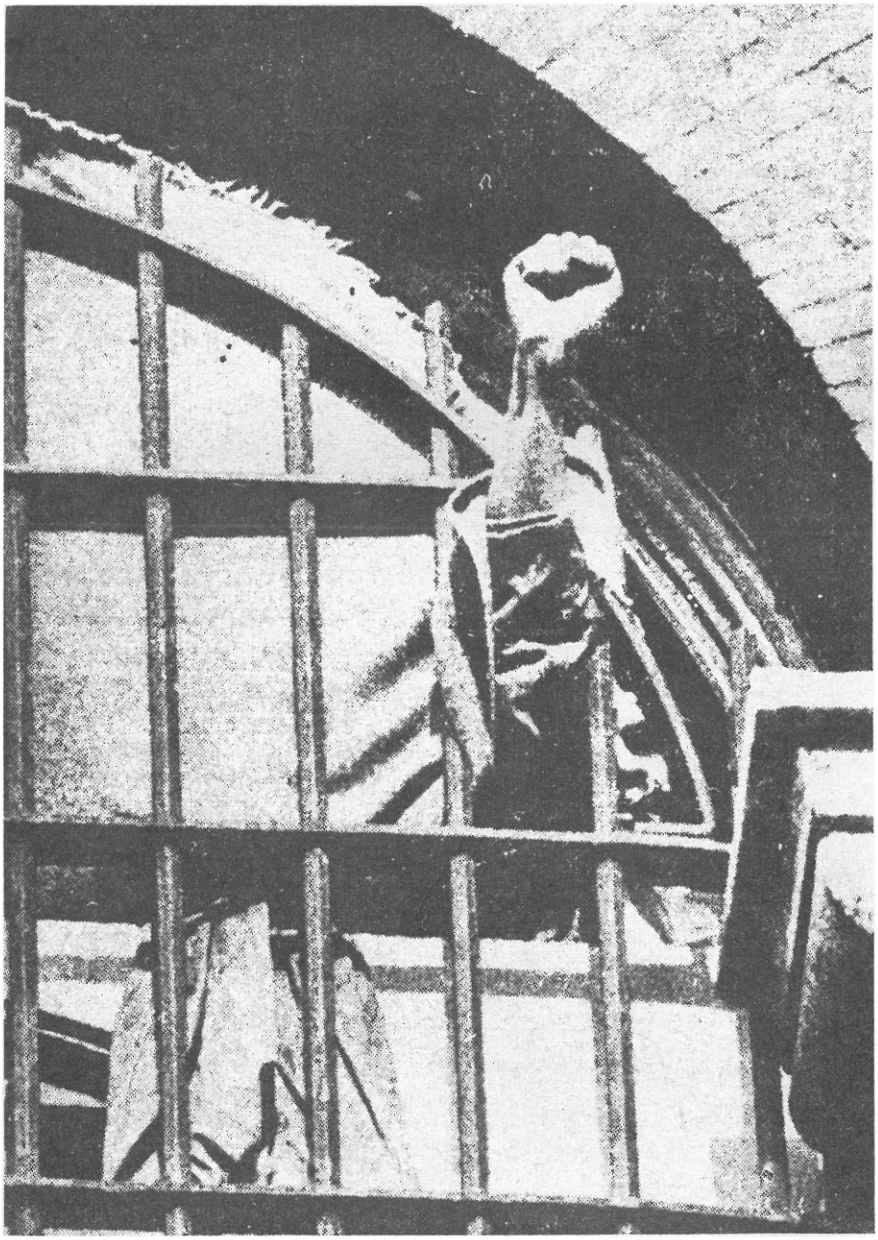
The Palestinian Arab mayors and heads of local councils are eager to confront this financial policy, as part of their long-standing defense of the rights of the population. This year's conference of the Regional Committee of Local Arab Council Heads, which convened in Shafa 'Amr on February 8th, accorded top attention to the budget crisis facing their municipalities and villages. Thirty-eight council heads assembled at this conference, which is held every four years after local elections, to agree on future work. The conference issued a document, entitled the National Consensus Statement, which outlined the political line and future program for the Regional Committee. This document reaffirmed that the "Arab people in Israel are an inseparable part of the Palestinian Arab people". Placing responsibility for the local councils' problems on the discriminatory policy of the Israeli government, the conference outlined specific steps whereby the council heads will work for improving conditions for their constituents. These steps include establishing councils in Arab communities where there are none, development and renewal programs, and cancelling land confiscation decisions. The Shafa 'Amr Conference also decided to call for a warning strike unless the government agrees to cover the councils' budget deficit and change its policy for allocating funds generally.

This could be the signal for escalated popular actions against the oppression and racism practiced by the Israeli authorities. It gives the Israeli government

The Shafa 'Amr Conference, 1984

two choices: either to cover the financial deficit, or face demonstrations, strikes and perhaps widespread unrest, especially on the upcoming Day of the Land. While the government does not desire the second possibility, it would counter the Likud policy to make meaningful concessions to the Palestinian municipalities. Moreover, the prevailing economic crisis in the Zionist entity, and the Likud's inability to find solutions, make fulfilling these demands a difficult task in any case. ●

Prison Strikes



Since May 1983, a strike has been going on in Neve Tertza women's prison at Ramle. Twenty militant women prisoners refused to work, rejecting kitchen tasks and serving the prison warden, as well as work such as sewing. For several months, they refused to accept their visitors in order to call attention to the seriousness of their situation. The strike was initiated to protest the repression enacted by the Israeli prison authorities. Later women in other prisons began solidarity strikes.

In the autumn, the Zionist authorities tried brute force in order to break the strike. Police raids into the prison were stepped up, and clubs and tear gas were used against the prisoners. This has been recurrent. In January, additional restrictions were imposed in a new attempt to end the strike. This included the banning of radio and television viewing for the prisoners, and the confiscation of books and notebooks, as well as other personal property. Moreover, the sun break was limited to one hour daily; visits of relatives were cut to one every two months, and the prisoners were not allowed to correspond with their families through the Red Cross.

A series of demonstrations have been held in occupied Palestine to show solidarity with the women prisoners and to protest their ill-treatment at the hands of the Zionist authorities. Democratic Israeli Jews have joined in many of these manifestations. Most recently, a demonstration was held in front of the prison, called by the Women Prisoners Society in Nazareth, and attended by relatives of the prisoners, as well as by progressive Israelis from the Committee to Stop the War in Lebanon. Then on February 12th, the democratic Israeli organization, Women Against Occupation, picketed a meeting of the Tel Aviv police, protesting the treatment of the Palestinian women prisoners.

Hebron jail strike

Prisoners in the jail at Hebron (Al Khalil) have been waging a similar strike since June 1983. They are protesting maltreatment by the prison authorities, who have isolated the prisoners into different sections and divided the only small yard into two.

These methods are common in the Zionist jails. In addition, many prisoners are subject to being constantly transfered from one prison to another, whereby the Zionist authorities try to create a state of confusion and instability among them.

In Damoun prison for teenagers, bad conditions of another sort prevail. There, political prisoners are mixed with criminals. In so doing, the prison authorities try to infect the political prisoners with harmful social phenomena - drugs, theft, immoral practices, collaborationist tendencies, etc., in order to break their will and develop more collaborators. These prisoners are also forced to do hard labor for long hours. This aims at destroying their youth, wearing them down physically as a way of eroding their will to resist, and their national identity and aspirations.

The conditions facing political prisoners in the Zionist jails must be further exposed. All democratic forces, including international organizations concerned with human rights, must raise their voices to condemn the suppressive acts of the Israelis, and express solidarity with the prisoners' courageous resistance. ●

The Zionist Entity
Unresolvable Crisis?

The acute economic and political crisis in the Zionist entity has reached an unprecedented level and at the same time proved immune to any solutions in the foreseeable future. Successive developments, arising from this fact, have raised questions about the future of the Likud government. It has become clear how divided and unstable the Likud coalition is. Moreover, public disenchantment with the Likud government is deepening; the latest opinion polls indicated a sharp drop in the popularity of Shamir and his government.

This mounting crisis did not emerge recently. On the contrary, it goes back to the nature of the economic system and social structure of 'Israel'. Heavy emphasis on military spending, and structural dependence on outside aid, are twin aspects inherent in the Zionist entity. In order to finance its super-aggressive policies, the governing coalition adopted a policy of gross overspending. This is exemplified by the misconceived military adventure in Lebanon and a misconceived domestic policy.

The cost of war and settlement

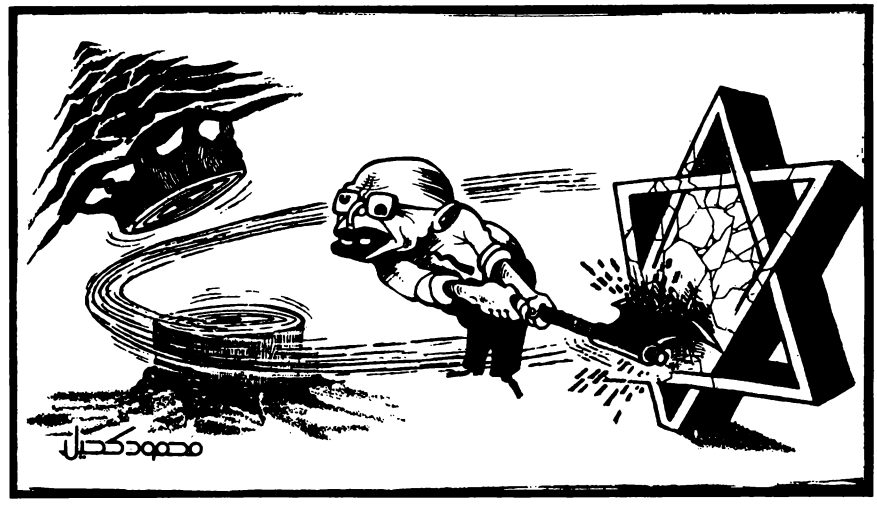
The outgrowth of Zionist aggression-continuing occupation and annexationist ambitions - exact huge security expenses in South Lebanon (estimated at $400 million per year), and the other occupied territories. To this is added the massive funds for the Zionist settlement policy in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Golan Heights. It is believed that the government invests some $200 million a year in the West Bank, apart from "defense" expenditures. These sums are carved from the budgets related to health and social services. Added to the above is the cost of developmental military projects, such as producing the Lavie fighter plane. Altogether, this means that the Defense Ministry swallows 30% of the total state budget.

The Likud is still insisting on the May 17th agreement as the basis for Israeli withdrawal from South Lebanon. This entails a continued stay for the Israeli army in Lebanon, and all that this means in financial and social costs. The result will be escalated political opposition to the Likud government, as well as deeper public disenchantment.

The Likud's policy has greatly complicated the economic crisis in 'Israel', leading to spiraling inflation, and even greater deficits in the balance of payments and foreign debt. In the meantime, the economic measures whereby the government has attempted to alleviate the crisis have been limited. Finally, the government lost the ability to control the economic situation. The deficit in the balance of payments, as of the end of 1983, reached $5.1 billion, inflation 191.7%, and the foreign debt increased to $24 billion.

with limited salaries are being hit particularly hard. The poor are becoming poorer. According to the National Security Institutional Report, there are now about half a million Israeli citizens (about 1/8) living in poverty. Of those, 135,000 are children, and 300,000 depend on the social security program.

At this moment, there don't appear to be any miracles forthcoming to relieve the Shamir government on the economic front, quite the opposite. Since last year, the government has been facing more public criticism, more resistance from the political opposition and most importantly, a wave of strikes. These began with the workers in El Al airlines, then moved to other sectors. Already the government has lost one finance minister, when Aridor resigned in October, after squabbles over how to resolve the economic crisis. When the cabinet finally managed to agree on the austerity measures proposed by his successor, Yigal Cohen-Orgad on January 8th, protests only intensified. Unrest and resentment were widespread in the large Israeli public sector, due to the erosion of wages imposed by the government's newly adopted measures.



The grave economic situation has negative effects on the average standard of living. Last autumn, Israeli citizens experienced an unprecedented rise in the cost of living (21.1% according to the October index figures). The standard of living is expected to fall by 7% in the 1984-85 financial year. Workers and employees

The staff at six government ministries imposed sanctions to press for their wage demands. Employees at the Foreign Ministry joined colleagues at the Interior, Welfare, Defence and other ministries in protesting the 25% erosion of their wages in the three previous months. A spokesman for the Histadrut said that in the past three months the government had broken the wage agreement with its austerity measures. He added, "We cannot make a deal with a government on cutting wages."

563 Israelis dead in Lebanon

On January 19th, Israeli radio reported the death, the day before, of an Israeli soldier, who was wounded in an ambush of an Israeli military convoy in South Lebanon. The radio added that with his death, the total number of Israeli soldiers killed since the 1982 invasion had reached 563.

Labor pitching for a comeback

The Labor Alignment is trying to take advantage of the opportunity presented by this grave situation and the inability of the Likud government to find solutions.

Alignment Member of the Knesset, Haim Bar Lev, who is also Secretary General of the Labor Party, told *Jerusalem Post* that the Alignment would agree to form an alternative coalition, "because anything is better for the country than the present desperate state of affairs." He added that if the threat of the parties in the coalition to leave the Likud leads to a parliamentary majority for early elections, the Alignment would prefer this to an alternative government.

The events of late January show that the Alignment is attempting to bring down the Likud government, whether through a no-confidence vote or through complicating the crisis of the Likud coalition on the popular level. In the latter effort, Labor's main card is the Histadrut. This was exemplified when Histadrut's General Secretary demanded that the government raise wages, and threatened strikes in many sectors.

Lately, the Labor Party's popularity has increased. The Alignment's political positions, particularly concerning Israeli presence in Lebanon and the settlement policy, correspond to newly emerging trends in Israeli public opinion. According to a poll published in *Jerusalem Post*, January 3rd, 72% of Israelis think that the first budget to be cut in the new austerity drive is the one for settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. Another poll in early February showed 39.5% of Israelis for immediate, unconditional withdrawal from Lebanon.

Due to the Zionist state's heavy dependence on outside aid, mainly from the US, the policies of the Reagan Administration are also a factor in assessing the internal Israeli power struggle. For one, Washington is deeply concerned about the Shamir government's inability to find solutions for the economic crisis, for social stability in the Zionist entity is a must for imperialism's plans in the area. On the other hand, some circles in the US administration are bothered by the Likud's static positions on issues like freezing West Bank settlements and withdrawing from Lebanon. If other conditions were to make implementation of the Reagan plan appear as a possibility, then the Likud's positions could come to be viewed as obstacles to US imperialism's strategic plans and interests in the area as a whole. The policies of the Labor Party, on the other hand, can harmonize more easily with the US long-term plans.

Israeli Crisis Hits Palestinians Hardest

On January 16th, the *Jerusalem Post* reported the statement of Abu Diab from the Arab Department of the Histadrut. He said that hundreds of Arabs working in construction in the western Galilee have lost their jobs over the last six weeks. He attributed this to the budget cuts which affected special and general development projects in the area. Abu Diab also predicted that skilled Arab employees, such as those who have been working in banks for the last twenty years, could lose their jobs due to the recession in the Israeli economy.

Expectations

Will the Israeli government resign? Are there going to be early elections? Such questions and many others are being raised in interested political circles. Judging from the fact that the Likud managed to buy off Tami, one of the small parties in the coalition that was thinking of breaking off, and, on the other hand, the Labor Party's fear of not being able to administer the deteriorating economic conditions, we do not expect a quick resignation or early elections. The following factors concerning the opposition support this judgement:

1. The Labor Party, though united in attacking the policies of the Likud, is not united internally. Peres does not enjoy widespread support. Rabin, on the other hand, while not enjoying broader support, has managed to split the loyalty of Labor Party members.

2. Navon, who is a serious competitor to both Rabin and Peres, is himself reluctant to push this competition. He prefers to wait — probably for better political and economic conditions.

3. The Labor Party prefers not to be "embarrassed" in front of the public concerning the future of the West Bank. In its program, Labor vowed to build more settlements on the West Bank, considering it a part of 'Israel' On the other hand, Labor has several times hinted at its readiness to negotiate the future of the West Bank with King Hussein.

What we actually expect is further deterioration of the economic situation in 'Israel' under the Likud, until the scheduled date for elections. The Labor Party, for the reasons outlined above, may not be willing or able to impose itself now. Moreover, despite growing public discontent, the Likud can still rely on the militant right-wing base that originally brought it to power in line with the overall consolidation of the right in the Zionist society. Moreover, till now, experience shows that it can also rely on the Reagan Administration's unqualified support. ●

Peace Now demonstration, Dec. 30th, for a settlement freeze: "Stop spending money in the territories."

GUPS Congress

The 9th National Congress of the General Union of Palestinian Students (GUPS) was held in Algiers, February 12-17th. Its convening was especially significant in that it is the first congress of a Palestinian mass organization to be held after the visit of Yasir Arafat to Cairo. Consequently, the focus of the deliberations was on political issues of utmost importance for the Palestinian cause. As GUPS is the most active mass organization of the Palestinian Revolution, the positions taken by its congress acquire substantial influence. The Palestinian resistance organizations have always attached great importance to the role of the GUPS. Thus, the positions it adopts provide a barometer of the opinion of broad sectors of Palestinian activists.

The Congress was composed of 167 delegates who had been elected by the respective branches of the GUPS over the past two years. An additional 45 delegates were nominated and approved by two-thirds majority at the congress, to represent branches in countries, such as Egypt, Turkey and Lebanon, where prevailing conditions had prohibited elections. Some delegates did not attend. They did not, however, make any statement as to political reasons for their absence. Their seats were left open. The congress was also attended by a large number of guest delegations from Arab student organizations and progressive student unions around the world.

For unity and democracy

Since the vast majority of the elected delegates participated, the Congress more than fulfilled the reguired quorum. The delegates included members of Fatah, DFLP, PFLP, the Arab Liberation Front, the Palestinian Communist Party and the Palestinian Liberation Front. This indicates a high degree of interest in the Congress as a forum for political struggle to unite the masses of our people on a clear political line and within the legitimate bodies that have been built up in the course of Palestinian national struggle. In truth, the Congress afforded this opportunity, precisely because of the democratic spirit that prevailed. On the whole, the constitution and by-laws of the GUPS were abided by regarding election of delegates, the congressional proceedings themselves, the adoption of the final statement and the election of a new leadership. Despite the severe disagreements experienced in the Palestinian arena this past year, there was a majority will that all delegates and political tendencies should enjoy full participation and expression of their views. There was no pressure or discrimination against any delegate's entry to the congress or right to speak.

G.U.P.S.

The GUPS has reason to be proud of having successfully practiced the democratic traditions developed in the Palestinian revolution and the PLO. Moreover, a great vote of thanks goes to our Algerian brothers, who facilitated the assembly and work of the Congress in every way possible. The Algerians demonstrated in practice their genuine respect for the independence of Palestinian decision-making and for democratic proceedings, free from interference, tutelage or pressure.

Our comrades' participation in the Congress was in accordance with the PFLP's approach to the current crisis in the Palestinian Revolution. This is based on belief that the only way to preserve the achievements of the PLO, while simultaneously rectifying its line and practice, is by persistent political struggle to rally our people around reform in the legitimate frameworks. Moreover, in relation to the GUPS Congress in specific, we find it important to distinguish between our own political platform and the correct way to work within a mass organization. As an example, the PFLP's political representatives to the Congress did not attend the opening session, where Arafat addressed the GUPS, because of our principled position that he has disqualified himself to lead our people. On the other hand, our members who were elected GUPS delegates, participated actively in all sessions of the Congress, because their prime duty is to contribute to unity, constructive work and correct political stands on the part of the Union as a whole.

In line with this, our comrades together with those of DFLP, the Palestinian Communist Party and the Palestinian Liberation Front, presented a memorandum expressing a joint viewpoint on major political issues and matters of special importance for the GUPS work. This was positively received by the great majority of delegates. The four organizations also presented a joint paper advocating the principle of proportional representation, motivated by desire to develop the democratic structure of the Union.

Political debate and final statement

The initial discussion at the Congress revolved around the Political Report presented by the Executive Committee of the GUPS. This paper presented a political line which was not acceptable to the majority of the Congress; it furthermore placed the GUPS in a position of addressing issues which are beyond the capacity of a student organization. Thus, the report was not adopted by the Congress, but referred to the Political Commission, whose 100 or so members, after thorough discussion, resolved to put it aside.

Consequently, the decisive political debate focused on drawing up the final statement. The principle stands befitting a mass organization of the Palestinian revolution were readily agreed upon: affirmation that the PLO is the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people based on adherence to the Palestinian National Charter and the resolutions of the PNC, and to the Palestinian people's right to return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent national state; adherence to the strategy of protracted people's war; escalating the armed struggle in the occupied territories in order to achieve the full inalienable rights of our people and abort all the imperialist and Zionist projects; preserving the inde-

pendent Palestinian national decision, yet always viewing this in the light of links with the Arab national liberation movement; strengthening Palestinian national unity on a correct, militant basis; adhering to democratic means for resolving secondary contradictions within the revolution; implementing democratic reforms in the ranks of the revolution and the bodies of the PLO; adherence to the principle of collective leadership, and ending individualist methods, in order to insure commitment to the PLO's political programs.

The final statement specified that the Palestinian revolution's strategic alliances are with the Arab liberation movement, in order to further the common struggle of the Arab masses against imperialism and its lackeys and their projects in the area, and for independence, democracy and progress. Relations with the Arab regimes should be determined in accordance with their stand on confronting imperialism and its plans, and their commitment to the Palestinian people's rights and the PLO's sole representation. It was concluded that although the Egyptian national movement had scored some successes, the fundamental policy of the regime had not changed; it has reaffirmed its commitment to Camp David. The GUPS adheres to the resolutions of the 16th PNC, which call for relations with the Egyptian regime only when it departs from the Camp David accords. The GUPS also reiterated the principle adopted at the last PNC, that future relations with Jordan should be on the basis of confederation after the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. A warning was delivered concerning the maneuvers of the Jordanian regime, and some Palestinian circles linked to it, who aim to circumvent the PLO's representation, which is not to be delegated, mandated or shared with any party.

The Congress extended full support to the struggle of the Palestinian people in the occupied homeland against the Zionist occupation and its designs. A special salute was addressed to the students in the face of Zionist repression. The GUPS reaffirmed the necessity of rebuilding and supporting the Palestinian National Front in the occupied homeland, to be the militant framework of all the nationalist forces' struggle, and part and parcel of the PLO.

The final statement called for an immediate halt to the Iraq-Iran war, for it is used by imperialism and reaction to divide the area and weaken the Arab national liberation movement; respect for the rights of both sides and noninterference in internal affairs was urged.

The final statement expressed full support and solidarity with the struggle of the Lebanese nationalist and progressive forces. It called for strengthening relations based on common struggle to liberate Lebanon from Zionist occupation, cancel the May 17th agreement, and preserve Lebanon's unity, sovereignty and Arab identity, and promote its democratic development; it also called for protecting the Palestinian masses in Lebanon and securing their human and social rights.

The final statement reaffirmed rejection of Camp David and the Reagan plan, based on enmity towards imperialism. It placed the Palestinian revolution squarely in the anti-imperialist camp, with vital relations to the socialist countries.

Two points elicited lengthy debate and much effort to find a common denominator of agreement. The first concerned the battles in Tripoli. The position finally adopted condemned the besieging of the camps and Tripoli, and the forces that participated in this. Unfortunately, there was a tendency to view these events in a highly emotional, unscientific manner. The need for repairing relations with Syria and Libya, in order to further the struggle against the enemy plans in the area, was totally neglected. Because the position adopted was not a careful evaluation that could contribute to solving the Palestinian crisis, our comrades found it necessary to register a reservation on this point, to be included among the Congress documents.

The second controversial point concerned Arafat's visit to Cairo. On this matter, our comrades worked for a clear condemnation of this visit on both political and organizational grounds. The formulation finally adopted reads: "The visit constitutes an individualist action that oversteps the organizational frameworks and institutions of the PLO. While we adhere to the resolutions of the PNC, especially its 16th session, as well as to the legitimate institutions of the PLO, we view that these institutions are required to evaluate this visit and place a blockade on its results, as these institutions are the controllers of Palestinian relations, based on the political program and PNC resolutions."

This clearly expresses an organizational criticism of the visit. Also, by calling for a blockade against its results, the GUPS has signalled political disapproval of the visit, though it is not outright condemned. Rather the visit is seen as a political error on the part of Arafat.

New leadership elected

The Congress elected a new leadership. A slate of candidates was drawn up and elected, apportioning the 33 seats in the GUPS Administrative Council between Fatah, PFLP, DFLP, ALF, and PCP. This council in turn elected a new Executive Committee which included members from Fatah, PFLP, DFLP and PCP.

As can be deduced from this article, the positions adopted at the GUPS congress did not correspond totally to the results which the PFLP and other organizations may have hoped for. However, the Congress was a success, for it preserved unity in an important mass organization of the Palestinian revolution. This shows that national unity can be maintained when democratic procedures and serious national commitment are applied. In this way, the experience of the Congress can be an example in ongoing efforts to resolve the crisis in the PLO. ●

West Bank students demonstrate at Jerusalem UNRWA headquarters on Jan. 31 against imposition of Jordanian comprehensive exam.

Jordan

The regime's new measures designed to pave the road to the Jordanian option.

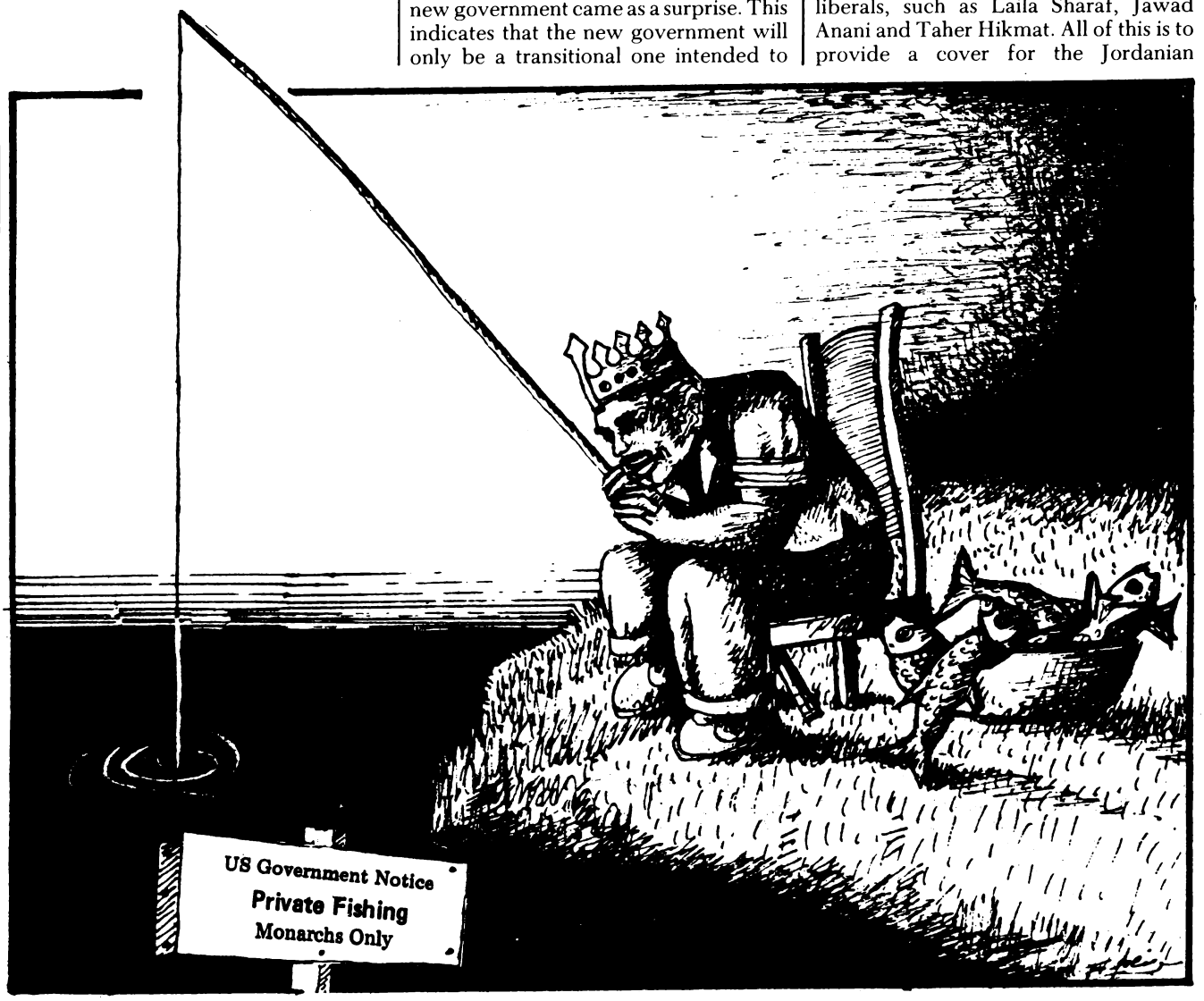
Ten years have elapsed since the Rabat Summit Conference. Now King Hussein is promoting talk of UN Security Council resolution 242, which does not conform to UN or Arab Summit decisions, which recognized the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people wherever they may be.

New government

In early January, King Hussein abolished the National Consultative Council and convened the suspended National Assembly (parliament), which then nominated Ahmad Obeidat, Minister of the Interior in Mudar Badran's government, to form a new Jordanian government. Mudar Badran headed the most lasting government in the history of Jordan. It lasted seven years, interrupted only for a short period by the government headed by the late Abdul Hamid Sharaf. Obeidat, the new Prime Minister, is the seventh minister of the interior, and the second chief of the intelligence, to become Prime Minister in Jordan. His first appointment to a governmental post (Interior Minister) came in April, 1982, after an ammendment made by Badran especially for this purpose.

For months it had been certain that Badran would step down as Prime Minister, because the regime needed a change due to the deterioration of the economy and lapses in security control. Thus Badran could be held responsible for the aggravated situation. However, the appointment of Obeidat to form a new government came as a surprise. This indicates that the new government will only be a transitional one intended to perform a specific mission: the internal rearrangement of the Jordanian household needed to pursue the next step in Camp David.

There are several points which confirm this: For one, the government was formed after the convening of the parliament which is considered to represent both the East Bank, i.e. Jordan, and the West Bank (Palestine). Moreover, the new government was formed in the context of attempts and wagers on a split in the PLO. While obviously not signifying any real change in the internal balance of power, the composition of the new government was carefully determined so as to maintain the formal balance between the various districts and tribes in Jordan. The government even included some liberals, such as Laila Sharaf, Jawad Anani and Taher Hikmat. All of this is to provide a cover for the Jordanian



regime's real intention, which is to return the West Bank to Hashemite dominance. It is Amman's belief that a suitable atmosphere can be maintained with application of the stick and carrot policy, and that a campaign of misinformation can gloss over the reason for forming a government headed by a previous chief of the intelligence.

In this light, even Laila Sharaf, the new Minister of Information, claiming to be liberal, appears more repellent than the Prime Minister himself, who has not appeared much until now. Sharaf has made many statements claiming Jordan's full responsibility for the West Bank, and also about Jordanian-Palestinian unity, based on the Ariha (Jericho) Conference in 1948, when it was decided to link the remaining parts of Palestine to the Hashemite Kingdom. Lastly, and most significantly, Sharaf has claimed that a minimum of attention should be accorded the 1974 Rabat Summit's decisions, which recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Needless to say, King Hussein's confirmation of the Rabat decisions was only a formality - a maneuver adopted while awaiting circumstances in the Arab and Palestinian arenas that would allow for reneging on the recognition of the PLO's representation and allowing for reusurpation of Palestinian national rights.

The freezing of parliamentary life in Jordan and the formation of a temporary council, the National Consultative Council, were in themselves a proof of the regime's real intentions vis-a-vis the West Bank, which became apparent with the recent steps taken by Amman, whereby the parliament was revived as a legislature for both banks. Calling the parliament and ammending article 73 of the constitution, to enable elections in Jordan and for West Bank deputies to be appointed by Jordanian MPs, exposed the regime's claim to responsibility for the West Bank, and its aim to have this responsibility recognized in Arab and international circles.

King Hussein affirmed Jordanian responsibility for the West Bank in his "Throne Speech" (the government declaration delivered to the National Assembly's regular sessions). The same message was repeated in the response to the "Throne Speech", the later government declaration, and Crown Prince Hassan (the King's delegate) in his speech to the 4th Islamic Conference held in Casablanca, Morocco, on January 16th.

To the same purpose, Jordan received the Egyptian Minister of the Economy, Mustafa Said, and dispatched Abu Oudeh, the Minister of the Royal Court, to Cairo to meet Husni Mubarak and discuss the ways deemed best by the King to resolve the Middle East conflict.

Careful scrutiny of the recent official Jordanian declarations reveals two points: first, reviving the Jordanian option on everything relating to the Palestinian question; and second, returning Egypt to Arab officialdom. In the present situation, Hussein deemed that pushing the Jordanian option, presented as the only possible solution for the Palestinian question, would not antagonize anyone in official Arab politics. To Amman, the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are minor matters which should not now be pressed, for all priority should be given to saving "the family and the land" (the favorite expression of official Jordanian information).

The mechanism needed to implement the Jordanian option has been clearly spelled out in two press conferences held by King Hussein and in Hassan's speech at the Islamic Summit. This depends on the US's calculations and ability to make good its promises concerning two matters: (1) Solving the Lebanese crisis by the withdrawal of the Israeli forces, as this, according to Amman, would leave no excuses for others not to withdraw; also, this would boost the capacity of the Lebanese authorities. (2) Stopping Zionist settlement-building on the West Bank; however, Amman has only demanded a stoppage, not asked for the abolition of the settlements built since 1967.

As is well-known, the Jordanian regime attributes the failure of the "peaceful" settlement to US hesitation and Israeli stubborness. According to King Hussein, if the Israeli Labor Party assumes power, this would overcome some obstacles, pushing the "peace" process ahead. Then the US would be given the chance to make good its promises, since Peres, Labor Party leader, presents himself as responsive to the prospects of a peaceful settlement regarding the West Bank, claiming readiness to stop new settlement - building near Arab population centers (though, of course, not to remove the old). The Jordanian regime hopes to inject its own role to resolve the remaining obstacle with the Labor Party, i.e., the fact that it is willing to negotiate ▶

Palestinians Disown Jordanian Moves

National Conference at Bir Zeit

Representatives of 31 mass and national institutions from the West Bank and Gaza Strip conferred at Bir Zeit University, January 23, and issued a statement strongly rejecting Jordan's recent parliamentary moves as a circumvention of the achievements of the PLO. Over 1000 people attended representing virtually all levels of Palestinian organisation in the occupied territories: voluntary work committees, worker's and professional unions, women's committees, universities, vocational and secondary school student councils and blocs, writers and artists federations, journalists and youth committees in towns, villages and camps signed the statement which called for boycotting the Jordanian parliament conspiracy to "represent" the West Bank.

The statement reiterated six positions: the firm and decisive stand against the Jordanian parliament conspiracy; the PLO as the sole legitimate representative and the commander of the struggle of all Palestinians wherever they may be; no alternative goals to the right of return, self-determination and the establishment of the Palestinian state; the unity of all PLO factions in the occupied territories within the national front; and silence from all brokers of Black September in the occupied land.

Mass institutions in Bethlehem

Eighteen national and popular institutions in Bethlehem signed a statement, February 8, strongly protesting last month's reconvening of the Jordanian parliament which included 30 West Bank 'representatives'.

Bethlehem sources told *Al Fajr* that the statement's timing coincides with a pro-Jordanian statement now being circulated for signatures.

The anti-Jordanian statement calls the reconvening of both houses of the Jordanian parliament as "bypassing the Rabat summit resolution which recognised the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people." The statement also considered the Jordanian move "a clear violation of the legitimacy of the PLO and its institutions."

Among the signatories to the statement were the student council and alumni association at Bethlehem University, the Dheisheh Youth Centre, local clubs, women's organisations and labour unions.

The Bethlehem institutions called the move "part of a chain of events aimed at liquidating the PLO and entering in the Camp David negotiations".

reprinted from "Al Fajr"

with any friendly Arab regime, but under no circumstances with the PLO.

The regime's second point - the return of Egypt - is in fact an appeal to the Arabs to join Camp David. Amman is forwarding another project to facilitate this appeal by calling for cancellation of the principle of unanimity in the Arab League, to be replaced by majority rule. The Jordanian regime's call expresses the wishes and interests of the official Arab majority who fully understand the mutuality of US-Arab bourgeois interests and thus have no opposition to expanding Camp David via the Jordanian option.

The Jordanian regime, which speaks incessantly these days of the "joint Jordanian-Palestinian march", has now found its golden opportunity, after the visit of Arafat to Cairo, and Mubarak's continued expression of adherence to Camp David after his meeting with Arafat.

The recent Jordanian measures, the reviving of the parliament and the choice of replacements for West Bank deputies who had passed away, are not surprising. They are the expression of the regime's policy, political calculations, and the role which it has never thought of relinquishing. In his "Throne Speech", the King said and later repeated: "The Palestinian cause has always been the cause of Jordan." Crown Prince Hassan declared that the Palestinian cause is more than essential for Jordanian moves, and that it enters into the innermost life and security of Jordan. This is certainly true in the sense that the very existence and development of the regime has been sponsored by imperialism and Arab reaction in order to have a gendarme to complement the Israeli role of dividing and controlling Palestine and the Palestinians, especially whenever they seek to raise their national cause for the sake of an independent democratic Palestinian society. For this same reason, Jordan has always been pivotal in any plans for dominating the area. In the light of the present conditions prevailing on the Arab level, including the Palestinian right wing's readiness for a settlement even if its role is to be minimal, the historical role of Jordan is taking on its current dimensions. Thus, the Jordanian option has concretely become the most crucial trap set for the Palestinian revolution at this stage. ●

Arafat's Visit to Amman

Ten months after an earlier visit, Arafat again met King Hussein in Amman, in late February. After discussions, a joint statement was issued, which had no dramatic contents. The declaration stated no confirmation of the Reagan plan, but specified general principles for joint Palestinian-Jordanian work. Yet, as had been earlier declared by a Jordanian responsible, those general principles should be based on UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, as was discussed between Reagan and Hussein during the latter's visit to Washington.

Different interpretations have been offered of this outcome: Some said that Arafat has not yet yielded all his cards to Hussein. Others left open the possibility of reaching an agreement. Still others related the result to the fact that Hussein, after sensing weaknesses and divisions in the PLO after Arafat's visit to Cairo, is no longer enthusiastic about a public agreement with Arafat, but simply wants Arafat to accept the steps taken by Amman to rob the PLO of its representation. Regardless of these speculations, Arafat's visit to Cairo left no room for doubt that he has made up his mind to seek solutions within the US horizons.

In an interview the same day Arafat arrived in Amman, Doctor George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, had the following estimation of the visit in advance: Answering a question as to whether the Arafat-Hussein dialogue would be successful, Comrade Habash stated, "No, I don't think so; the only result will be the weakening of the PLO. Although King Hussein has publicly approved regarding the Reagan plan, at the same time, 'Israel' has publicly refused it. This is the first obstacle. The second obstacle will be in the Palestinian-Jordanian relation. King Hussein wants Yasir Arafat to say: 'All right, you can talk in the name of the Palestinians.' Although, of course, we are highly critical of the policy of Arafat, yet at the same time I think that Arafat will not give an O.K. to this proposal. That is why I think there will be no use to this talk in Amman. The only result will be the weakening of the PLO and the confusion experienced by our masses at this critical time."

Nationalist Victory

REAGAN PLAYS WITH FIRE AND GETS BURNED

US imperialism and the Amin Gemayel government failed to heed the warning sounded by the nationalist forces in the September '83 mountain war. Their political vision blinded them to the depth of the power embodied in the de facto popular authority maintained in Beirut's southern suburbs. Most of all, they underestimated the breadth of the popular rage smoldering against their plans to make Lebanon a US-Zionist protectorate and gateway for spreading Camp David in the area. Stepped-up arrest campaigns in January, adding several hundred Palestinians and Lebanese to the fascists' dungeons, had only realerted the population to the internal consequences of the regime's chosen course.

The enemy imagined that the Lebanese Army could make a clean sweep, ending the war of attrition with the nationalist forces, squashing West Beirut under its heel and severing the corridor connecting Beirut's southern districts to the nationalist-controlled areas in the surrounding hills. To this end, an offensive was planned for late January or early February, by the regime in coordination with its US and French allies in the Multinational Forces. However, these calculations backfired on all levels - military, political and social.

The Reagan Administration, which played with fire when planning the 1982 invasion together with 'Israel', has now been forced to face the music sounded by the Lebanese nationalists' guns and popular support. Also, 'Israel' is paying the price, with the regime it tried to install in tatters. The battle of Beirut, Part II, reinforced the truth that by force of arms and popular unity, the aggressors against the Arab masses will eventually be defeated.

The military battle

Preliminary battles began on February 2nd, in Beirut's southern districts, pitting the army mainly against the Amal movement. Two days later, Lebanon was engulfed in all-out civil war, with the army sending 50 shells a minute into the shanty towns, and the nationalist artillery targeting fascist positions north to Junieh, east to Zahle and southwards. On the 6th, after a 17-hour pitched battle, the Lebanese Army was ousted from West Beirut by a combination of hand-to-hand combat and artillery support from the mountains. Having combined their forces from the capital to the mountains, the nationalist forces went on the offensive. A week later, the army and Phalangist forces were driven from key positions in the mountains south of Beirut. Khaldeh, the coastal crossroads linking Beirut's southern entry to the Shouf and Aley regions, was in nationalist hands. The fascist siege of Beirut was broken; the fighters of the mountains and West Beirut, specifically, the Progressive Socialist Party and the Amal movement, established a joint military command. On February 15, the Lebanese Army's 4th brigade (one of two crack units, US-trained and Phalangist-controlled) was surrounded in Damour; then the nationalists gained control of the town.

Victorious Amal fighter on the spot once occupied by the Marines

Rather than wiping out the nationalist corridor, the regime set Lebanon ablaze and enacted its own isolation, not only politically but in terms of territory. The "central government" is now holed up in pockets. The 1,500 man 8th brigade (the other crack unit) at Souq al Gharb is the last line of defense for the Baabda Presidential Palace and the Defense Ministry. It is only one step before Amin Gemayel's authority is banished to its backland in the Phalangist ghetto created in Ashrafiyeh (East Beirut) and Kaserwan. ▶

No to the Phalangist regime

On the political level, the head-on confrontation led the opposition to sharpen its platform. In the face of efforts to enact a security plan prior to any political solution (actually a cover for the army's planned offensive), PSP leader Walid Jumblatt, on January 31st, accused the regime of amassing its troops. Terming the security plan a "waste of time", he predicted, "The decisive battle is forthcoming and inevitable. A solution with the Phalangists is impossible." By February 4th, the National Salvation Front had specified its conditions for a ceasefire: withdrawal of the US and other MNF troops; neutralization of the Lebanese Army; unconditional Israeli withdrawal and abrogation of the Lebanese-Israeli accord; commitment to national dialogue; and abolition of Phalangist hegemony. Amal leader Nabih Berri's call for patriotic ministers to resign precipitated the end of the Wazzan government. By February 6th, both Jumblatt and Berri were calling for Amin Gemayel's resignation, strengthening the political platform uniting their respective military forces' joint struggle. Also, in this round, the nationalist leadership directly called on soldiers to desert from the fascist-controlled army.

This signified a definitive crystallization of the national forces' standpoint: That the only way to abrogate the May 17th agreement and prevent fascist hegemony in Lebanon is to remove Amin Gemayel from the presidency. It is he who represents the Phalangists' hold on state power, and this is irreconcilable with Lebanon's unity, Arab identity and democratic development. (See interview with Comrade George Hawi for further discussion of this aspect.)

Mass desertion

The enemy forces' most fatal miscalculation was totally overlooking the social factor, and its link-up with the political and military aspects. On February 2nd, as the army was besieging the southern districts of Beirut, a high Shiite religious leader, Qabalan, warned that the use of the army in these areas would "create a revolt in the soul of the soldier, who could not side with the authorities against his people." However, what the sheikh could easily foresee seemed an unknown factor to the Reagan Administration militarists, who think that all conflicts can be resolved by brute force.

Under the impact of the all-out confrontation, the Lebanese Army experienced disarray in its ranks no less extensive than its break-up during the 1975-76 civil war. In the battle for West Beirut, 90% of the soldiers surrendered their arms to the nationalist forces. Over 6,000 went over to the nationalist side. Ibrahim Shaheen, a deserting officer, called for changes in the military's structure, so that it will do its national duty in the South, and not against the people.

It was estimated that one-third of the Lebanese Army was incapacitated, yet Reagan persisted in blaming Syria for the nationalist advance, ignoring all internal Lebanese factors. The US aid to the army — heavy shelling from the Sixth Fleet — was destructive enough for the Lebanese land and civilians: On February 8th alone, the New Jersey indiscriminately fired almost 300 one-ton shells into the mountains. However, this made no dent in the internal balance of forces favorable to the nationalists. In retrospect, it appears as a show of sound and fury, to cover the Marine's subsequent retreat to the warfleet.

By the time the nationalist forces took Khaldeh, several hundred soldiers of the Lebanese Army 4th division were fleeing across the Awali River to the protection of the Israeli occupiers; others had deserted in favor of the nationalist forces. The brigade itself was surrounded in Damour and eventually retreated without much of a fight, in order to be evacuated by ship to the fascist harbor of Junieh. The 4th and 8th brigades had been the only evidence a White House spokesman could find on February 9th, to back up the US claim that the Lebanese Army had not collapsed.

The Reagan Administration's policy of supporting local dictators, without regard for their lack of popular support,

In a Nutshell - Causes of the Crisis

In an interview with Francoise Chipaux and Lucien George, printed in "The Guardian", February 21st, Amal leader Nabih Berri very succinctly pinpoints the crisis between the fascist controlled regime and the population, which led the nationalist forces to decide to liberate West Beirut.

Asked why the battle of West Beirut began in the southern suburbs, Berri replied: "Twenty-five per cent of the Lebanese population (roughly 700,000 people) live in this suburb at the entrance to Beirut. The great majority of the people living there are Shiites, but there are also a fair number of Christians...in addition to Sunnis and Druze. All these people have one thing in common - they are poor and underprivileged...The army, 'Phalangized' by the government, treated the people the way the South African regime treats the blacks. The Lebanese Forces entered the suburb and even opened offices... operating under the cover of the army.

Using peaceful means, I tried to warn the government against establishing such a presence. It was necessary to prevent a repetition of the tragedy that took place in Nabaa, another poor Shiite neighbourhood where the inhabitants were chased out by the Phalangists in 1976. I organized meetings, gave news conferences and brought the matter to the public's attention. But still with no result.

"When on February 2nd, the Mar Mikhael church, held by the Lebanese army, was taken by our militiamen, I expected the army to counterattack... Instead of fighting, the army shelled the poorer neighborhoods of the southern suburb for 18 hours, using 60 tanks, and 170,000 people had to leave their home. It was a monumental crime..."

When asked why the battle was so violent, and if there was a plan to invade the southern suburb, Berri answered: "You can't invade the southern suburb. The idea was to terrorize its inhabitants and force them to flee, and thereby whittle down the population's socio-political clout which the government finds irksome.

"These people are against religious sectarianism, against the proprietary interests representing them in the parliament and against the Lebanese-Israeli agreement of May 17, 1983. They are determined to liberate Lebanon, starting from the south."

met its Waterloo in Beirut and Central Lebanon. Despite over a quarter billion dollars in imperialist aid over the past year, the Lebanese Army was simply not up to its task. Of course, the Reagan Administration took immediate measures to rectify this, deciding to up the present 100 US advisors training the army to several hundred. However, the fact of the matter is that what is left for the US in the way of coherent, local fighting forces is the fascists (their militias and the hard-core of the army), who have previously showed their incapacity to impose themselves beyond their own ghetto without outside help. Even more direct military involvement on the part of 'Israel' and/or the US's own forces is required, yet these options involve internal repercussions in the respective aggressor states. Moving the Marines to the Sixth Fleet and assigning greater firing prerogative to the warships can impose more destruction on Lebanon, as can the resumed Israeli air raids. Yet neither has proved capable of changing the minds of the Lebanese masses and nationalist forces. At this point, it is they who are deciding.

Echoes of victory

The repercussions of the nationalist victory echoed beyond Lebanon's borders, compounding the dilemma of Washington strategists. The enemy forces had mapped out Lebanon as the stage for breaking through the obstacle which Syrian steadfastness poses for Camp David. Quite the opposite occurred. By asserting predominance in the internal balance of forces, the Lebanese nationalists simultaneously highlighted the weight of Syria, which shares the Lebanese National Salvation Front's founding premise: rejection of the May 17th accord, or any similar capitulation to 'Israel'. Thus, the US failure to impose its wishes on Lebanon in turn exposes the weak points in its regional strategy, for one, its understimation of the Syrian role.

The nationalist victory also opened new vistas for the Palestinian revolution. Revolutionary Palestinian organizations placed their forces under Lebanese nationalist command; Palestinian fighters confronted the US and fascist aggression alongside the Lebanese masses and militants. In late February, PFLP Politbureau member, Bassam Abu Sharif, issued a statement affirming that the PFLP's fighting forces are in Lebanon, not in Beirut, but mainly in the Beqaa Valley, side by side with the Lebanese nationalist and progressive forces: "We have put all our capacities at the disposal of the Lebanese nationalist forces and coordinate with them to resist the Israeli occupation of the South." Comrade Bassam explained that the Palestinian revolution has no plans to return to its old form of presence in Lebanon, but he stressed that the Palestinians in the camps have every right to freedom of political and social action.

The importance of the Palestinian revolution as a whole doing its utmost to consolidate its alliance with Syria and the nationalist Lebanese, on a correct basis, is underscored by the fact that the battle is not ended. Rather, a new chapter has been opened in the struggle to roll back imperialist-Zionist-reactionary dominance in the area. There are, moreover, concrete signs that the enemy forces will try to reverse their set-back.

Any US or Israeli attempt will of necessity rely on the medium of the Lebanese fascists. In this context, it is interesting to note the moves of the different components of the fascist Lebanese Front. On the one hand, we see Amin Gemayel desperately maneuvering to save his position, speaking of annulling the treaty with 'Israel' and putting out feelers for a reconciliation with Syria. On the other, there are other, more basic indications of the fascist position: The Lebanese Front 'godfathers', Pierre Gemayel and Camille Chamoun, and their miltia commander, Fadi Frem, have loudly declared that the treaty must not be cancelled. Efforts are being made for 'President' Gemayel to cement more open and binding relations with 'Israel'. The fascists know very well that the Lebanon they want is totally antagonistic to that being created by the Lebanese nationalist and progressive forces; they are preparing their alliances for a comeback.

Indeed, the contradictions between the fascists and the progressive nationalists run too deep, and are currently too intensified, to allow for easy compromise. It is indicative that in this round, the traditional Saudi mediating role has been rendered impotent. All indications point to continued conflict, and in this, we pledge our support to the heroic Lebanese national and progressive forces, for a free and democratic, Arab Lebanon. ●

The Israeli Response - South Lebanon

The nationalist forces' advance from West Beirut to Damour, only about ten miles from the occupation lines, compounded the Zionists' dilemma in South Lebanon. Their response was predictable: Top officials reaffirmed Zionist intentions to remain indefinitely in the South. The regular IDF patrols north of the Awali line multiplied in an effort to intimidate the national forces. All-out aggression was stepped up. On February 10th, Israeli bombers struck the mountains. On February 19th, Damour, as well as sites in the mountains, were hit. On February 21st, there was a new air raid on the Beirut-Damascus highway.

Actually, the Israeli cabinet had been deliberating further partial pull-backs in order to escape the escalating attacks of the Lebanese National Resistance Front. In particular, they were considering a pull-out from Saida, having already transferred their headquarters to safer ground inland in a Phalangist barracks at Kfar Falous. This is a tribute to the heros who have transformed Saida and the entire southern coast into a hell for the occupiers. According to Israeli radio, the Zionist troops were attacked 46 times in January on the coastal road alone. In the South as a whole, military operations were averaging 4-5 daily in the middle of the same month. To further enrage the Zionists, three Katyusha rockets fell at Metullah in northern Palestine on February 9th. ▶

A Tale of Courage - Young and Old

On January 21st, the Israelis descended on the village of Hallusiyeh, just south of the Litani River. Due to the villagers' resistance, they were unable to capture the Shiite Sheikh, Abbas Harb, whom they had decided to hold responsible for recent military operations in the area. Later, an entire convoy raided the village and snatched Harb and nine others away by helicopter. Hallusiyeh and two neaby villages were clamped under siege.

The general strike called in the South due to the IDF's imposition of compulsory mourning for their fascist lackey, Saad Haddad, grew into an uprising after the new arrests. Thus, on January 24th, the Israelis brought Harb to his village and instructed him to quiet the people. Instead he had the courage to urge them to resist. The Zionist soldiers beat him brutally and carried him away to an unknown destination, but they could not so easily silence the people: A battle ensued, and a fourteen year old son of the village opened fire on the soldiers, hitting five of them. He was instantly shot and killed, but his name, Ali Younis, will be remembered as one of the martyrs of the heroic Lebanese resistance.

Permanent revolt

In their frenzied efforts to abolish resistance, the Zionists have enacted "security" measures to the point of counter-productivity. The IDF ushered in the new year with 50 new "security" regulations, new arrest campaigns (adding to the 800 southerners estimated already detained), and widespread uprooting of orchards. In turn, the masses made revolt the permanent feature of life in the South, with strikes, demonstrations, sit-ins and clashes with the enemy forces.

In their fear, Israeli soldiers have repeatedly acted in a manner seemingly designed to provoke even the most complacent - raiding a Saida mosque with search dogs, singling out respected religious leaders, and on several occasions, firing into crowded Saida streets at midday, injuring civilians, because of a suspected car bomb. The Zionists have always prided themselves on their "Arabists", claiming ability to subdue the occupied population with subtle means. But like in occupied Palestine, the facts in South Lebanon show that the contradiction between the oppressed and the oppressors cannot be solved by psychological means or petty inducements. The logic of occupation is brute force - and the popular response is resistance. Now that the front of Lebanese nationalist resistance has spread from the South to Beirut, the Likud government is doubly caught in the trap of its own making. It is more than ever clear that the goals of the 1982 invasion will not be fulfilled, no matter how long the IDF remains; continuing casualties bring this home to the Israeli public daily, feeding the internal crisis in the Zionist entity. Yet further withdrawal, to save lives and soften the criticism, will increase the territory of liberated Lebanon. This would provide the example which the Zionists, like imperialism and Arab reaction, most fear, that armed popular resistance is the only way to recover occupied Arab land. ●

Interview with Comrade Hawi

On February 6th, the Lebanese Army lost control of West Beirut, and was threatened by widespread desertion from its ranks. The previous day, Prime Minister Wazzan's government had resigned. Yet US envoy Rumsfield had the audacity to declare, "We don't believe the Lebanese government has collapsed."

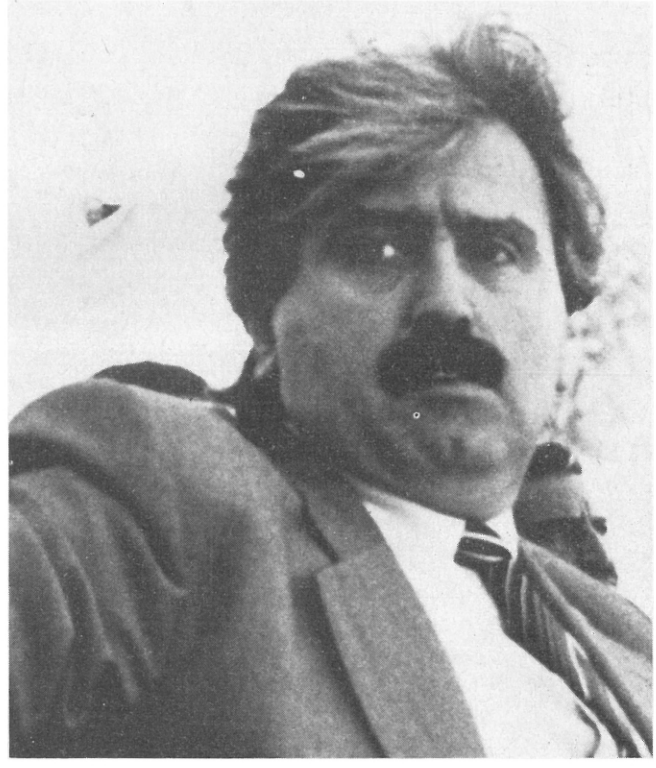
On this real turning point of a day, the PFLP's weekly, "Al Hadaf", had the opportunity to interview Comrade George Hawi, General Secretary of the Lebanese Communist Party, on the latest developments and the perspectives of the nationalist victory in Beirut. Of particular interest are Comrade Hawi's evaluations of the linkage between the armed struggle in South Lebanon and in Beirut, and of the possibility for the Palestinian revolution to benefit from the recent Lebanese experience in order to reestablish its struggle in Lebanon on a more fruitful basis than before.

On the Wazzan government's resignation...

Wazzan's resignation is the beginning of the collapse of the rule of the Phalangists and the Gemayel family. From one angle, it is no doubt a political maneuver aiming to dilute the total, united political opposition that emerged in confronting the Gemayel authority. It also aims to absorb the popular disenchantment with the authority on both domestic and foreign policy issues. However, this maneuver came too late and did not take into account the most recent developments. The popular movement and the position of the progressive forces, mainly the National Salvation Front and the Amal movement, has closed the door on all maneuvers.

The question is no longer one of a government, whether like the previous one or a national unity government, if it works with this group (the Phalangists) who are responsible for destroying all Lebanon, including Ashrafiyeh, the Metn, Kaserwan, Bint Jbail and Batroun (areas with large Christian populations which the Phalangists claim to represent). Moreover, it is no longer possible to have a dialogue with the Phalangist Party or its representatives in power. Walid Jumblatt, in our name, rejected entering into any parliamentary, political maneuvers or consultations. Also, Nabih Berri, in our name, rejected this game. Both emphasized a major demand: the downfall of Amin Gemayel.

The other tasks will come as a result of this major task, cancelling the May 17th agreement, departure of the invading US troops and the rest of the MNF, removing all forms of the Phalangist Party's authority in the state and from all affairs related to the political, economic and social future of Lebanon. Other issues related to the authority will be under discussion with the new president of the republic, not with the present one.



Developments have gone way beyond halfway or partial solutions. The policy of the Phalangists and the President closed the door on halfway solutions or reconciliation. Our call for reconciliation was never a call for reconciliation with

the Phalangist Party. On the contrary, it was a method to expose the policy and behaviour of the Phalangists. We insist on a common life in a democratic Lebanon in which all citizens live with equal rights and duties, and are free to choose their political system, their representative and judicial institutions, and the power apparatus that serves this choice. We always emphasized that what has prevented this choice is the project of discriminatory, sectarian, one-group hegemony.

In order for the Lebanese people to live on the basis of national reconciliation, the first requirement is total defeat of the project of Phalangist hegemony, which we rightfully described as the project for the Zionization of Lebanon. The latest events have placed the country on the threshold of a solution which would enable our people to regain complete independence, confirm their Arab identity, guarantee democratic development and mobilize their potentials for the battle of liberating the territory occupied by the Israeli enemy. This means supporting the Lebanese National Resistance Front against the occupation, supporting the popular movement that has transformed the South into a permanent uprising against the occupation, with the participation of all social, political, nationalist and religious circles.

On the western media's reports about reservations of some parties in the National Salvation Front concerning Jumblatt's call for Amin Gemayel's resignation...

There is a desire on the part of the western and reactionary media that there be such a difference. Certainly, the disparity, which may exist about the method of getting rid of the Phalangist authority, is exaggerated. There is no difference on the principle of getting rid of it. This disparity stems from differing positions on how to combat the Phalangist hegemony. We see this disparity as tactical differences as to the method for salvation. We leave it up to experience on the one hand, and the balance of forces on the other, to determine the best approach for implementing the tasks agreed upon. Our conviction is that the development taking place in the field is the determining factor in resolving this question. Therefore, we should not be impressed by this media exaggeration which expresses the desires of its owners, more than expressing the facts.

On the current situation and its perspectives...

First, allow me to address what I consider to be the resurgence (of the national movement) in the present circumstances. The basic thing here is what is taking place in South Lebanon: the armed struggle against the occupation. The role of this struggle is determining the overall revolutionary process in Lebanon. Israel is the central, basic link in the chain of the enemy plan. Therefore, weakening this link will weaken the other links. The historic decision to resist the Israeli occupation by force of arms, and the historic initiative taken by our party in this respect, provided the major prelude to the process of resurgence taking place today in Beirut.

This is the main lever in the process of nationalist revival. It is also the real lever for a revolutionary Arab nationalist resurgence. We provide the start of a new phenomenon in the Arab national liberation movement and a heritage for all revolutionary traditions in the Palestinian revolution — (how to) develop it and avoid falling into the great error previously committed. I will not here characterize the role of all the nationalist forces participating in the heroic struggle of our people. However, I would like to emphasize the special role played by the PFLP in this context, by cooperating totally with us. This provides a distinguished example as to how relations between the Lebanese progressive and nationalist forces and the Palestinian revolution should be.

The uprising in Beirut achieved the first part of its tasks by liberating West Beirut from the army of the one-group authority and the control of the Phalangist Party. I want to note the important role of the patriotic soldiers and officers who refused to continue being used as a repressive tool against their own people, their relatives and the working masses in the southern suburbs and Beirut.

Concerning the Israeli occupation, withdrawal will inevitably be imposed, and the attempt to create a puppet mini-state for Israel in the South will fail, as the masses' avalanche continues, to liberate their land from the Israeli occupation and its lackeys, and consolidate nationalist control in the South. We are not for the army of the one-group authority returning to the South. We struggle under the slogan: The Land to Whoever Liberates It! The South is for the workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals, students, women and men of the South. The South is for the honorable militants of the Amal movement and our party, and all progressive and nationalist forces of the South.

In light of the tasks mentioned previously, two duties lie ahead of us: first, to abolish Phalangist control in the state; accordingly, we will work on the second: assembling the broadest forces from all political, religious and social trends in the broadest front (which already exists), irregardless of the organizational framework. We will work to recruit the broadest popular movement possible to wage all forms of struggle, without exception, in order to achieve this task, for in the final analysis, this is what is required to liberate Lebanon, unite it and guarantee its Arab identity. These tasks are connected and cannot be separated from each other.

On whether the regime and Phalangist Party will try to trap the opposition in a compromise...

We have to differentiate between compromises and compromises. The conflict and any dialogue revolve on major issues: first the political position towards the May 17th agreement and the Israeli occupation, its conditions and results. For our part, we will not make any compromises in this area. We stand for the absolute cancellation of this agreement, waging the battle for liberating the country unconditionally, implementing Security Council resolutions 508 and 509, and sufficing with the 1947 armistice agreement. Any compromises made by the authority below this line cannot deceive the active, influential nationalist forces. The struggle against the May 17th agreement is a struggle against all the political results of the Israeli occupation, a major one of these being the Phalangist authority. We will struggle to bring down the Phalangist project for hegemony.

Concerning compromises on other issues, we will not accept anything which allows for the continued presence of the US forces or the MNF in Lebanon. Any flexibility in tactics will not be at the expense of the principle decisions. We insist on the cancellation of political confessionalism and drawing up a schedule whereby the process of cancelling this will take place gradually. Our insistence on principles will be total, but there may be flexibility concerning the form of application.

The second issue, which does not tolerate partial concessions, is the enactment of a serious, democratic change in the popular representation in Lebanon, the parliament and the election law. We shall insist on the principle of change. As a working class party, we believe that there is no room for real democracy unless the power of the bourgeoisie is brought down. Yet we struggle for the highest degree of democracy possible in the framework of the bourgeois state. This will create an atmosphere conducive to developing our struggle for bringing down the bourgeoisie's control of the power.

The third major issue is the army. There is a decisive, united, nationalist position: Either a nationalist army to de- ▶

People of the southern suburbs - living under Phalangist threat, Dec. 1983

fend Lebanon as an independent Arab state in the face of Israel and its imperialist backers, or there will be no army in Lebanon. Without this task for the army, there is no need to have an army; the internal security forces are better than the army in preserving internal security. We want an army that agrees with Syria and the Palestinian revolution on confronting the Israeli occupation and the danger of US aggression, not an army that fights Syria and the Palestinian revolution with US and Israeli support.

There is also the economic crisis. An added reason for this crisis is that billions of dollars are paid in cash to the US and France. The state pays 30% more than market price in order to have immediate delivery. The state also pays the price of shells shot by the US fleets against our people and the Lebanese treasury. All this is accompanied by deals and brokerage within the government. The economic situation is a total disaster. It threatens the working masses with unemployment, the agricultural workers with losing their bread; also small producers are threatened, as is the national industry and agriculture and a major part of services.

The destructive social consequences of the economic crisis portend the emergence of crises of a new type. The bread revolt, as happened in Tunisia and Morocco, is possible in Lebanon, but here it will be among an armed people, an armed working class, armed revolutionary forces. We shall not fail to use any method in our struggle to keep the working class and other working people from paying the price of the crisis. How can the working class go hungry while possessing arms and when there is food in stock, and money accumulating in the monopolies' treasuries? We propose a socio-economic reform in the country, even more strongly than in the previous period, because the crisis is more violent and destructive than previously.

Where, then, is it possible to make compromises? Why compromise with the state? Our principled position specifies a set of factors: (1) the balance of forces, (2) the position of our allies, in as much as we may propose an advanced task, (3) our permanent distinction between the central link in the struggle and other links, (4) our view that if the major link is broken, this opens opportunities for developing the struggle in other areas. The battle is going to be difficult and long. Our major task is to build an internal balance of forces that demonstrates the internal character of the battle. This will lessen external influence without cancelling it. This would also have the Arab position become a supportive one and not an alternative that runs against the Lebanese progressive and nationalist forces. We will work to have complete coordination with Syria and the Palestinian revolution, and we will rely on international support to our national cause.

On the perspectives for the Lebanese National Resistance Front if the Israelis were to withdraw from the South...

If Israeli withdrawal takes place, it means that we have made a great historical accomplishment, not only in our struggle in Lebanon, but this would have repercussions on the Arab national liberation movement in general and the Palestinian revolution in particular. In this case, we face a major question: What can a liberated Lebanon offer the Palestinian revolution in support of the Palestinian people's cause? It is inevitable to play a very important role, not less than the role played by Lebanon previously; the practice will be the same, but in different forms. It is not in the interest of the Palestinian revolution, the Lebanese progressive forces, Lebanon, or the Palestinian cause, to return to the same anarchy and old practices. This did not push the Palestinian revolution to practice its vanguard role in a better way. Lebanon will not go back to the same exposed form of conflict, as a place for public Palestinian revolution presence, exhibitionism and intermittent infighting. Lebanon, with its nationalist ties, belongs to the Lebanese nationalist forces, and to the Palestinian revolution as well. We must know how to use this arena better for the Palestinian revolution, while at the same time not damaging the Lebanese nationalist forces. We must use it as a means to mobilize potentials in order to continue the struggle in all forms, inside and outside the occupied territories, for liberating Palestine and achieving the legitimate national tasks of our people. We are not ready to return to an approach that bypasses the Lebanese national factor and then drags the Palestinian revolution into problems that detract from its tasks of liberation, as happened before. The Palestinian revolution will not find it easy to establish a kingdom on others' territory, instead of struggling based on the facilities available in this land for the political, military and popular work in the occupied territories. This requires a radical change in the size and quality of Palestinian armed presence and the form of practice. In this perspective, the PLO no longer needs the thousands of fighters, but it needs quality fighters.

On the Palestinian role in the Lebanese National Resistance Front...

It is our duty to say that Palestinian revolutionary forces, among them PFLP and DFLP, participate in an important part of the Lebanese National Resistance. However, Palestinian participation is not limited to the South. Palestinians are present in other areas - the mountains, the southern suburbs of Beirut, etc. More than others, they are exposed to terror, harassment and maltreatment by the puppets of Israel, the fascist forces and the authority. Self-defense is a basic right. On one hand, they participate according to their conviction in their self-defense. On the other, they participate with the Lebanese National Resistance Front, their allies in the struggle.

On the future...

A realistic analysis of the conflict today, on different levels, makes us optimistic. Our victory in Lebanon, if totally achieved, will not only automatically reflect on the overall situation of the Arab national liberation movement. In addition, the dilemma for US imperialism and Israel in Lebanon will develop into a big dilemma for Arab reaction... We have confidence in the abilities of our people, in the support of our allies and friends, and in the ability of our own party as well.

Tunisia - Morocco

Once Again, the Hungry Rise Up

Before the quelling of the popular uprising in Tunisia, in early January, a new one had started in Morocco. Besides the great similarity in the causes of both, the masses in the two countries used the same methods of protest. This led to widespread clashes with the regimes' forces, and as a result, hundreds of victims. Both the Tunisian and Moroccan authorities answered the protesting masses with iron and fire.

In Morocco, the uprising coincided with the Islamic Summit Conference, a fact of great embarrassment to King Hassan II, who promptly clamped a news black-out on events in the streets. Both regimes employed tanks, besieged universities and schools, and imposed martial law. In Tunisia, brute force was rounded off with a political maneuver: The Interior Minister was made to resign, serving as a scapegoat for the price rises which sparked the revolt. And as spoke Bourguiba in Tunis, so did King Hassan in Morocco, on local television and radio, accusing "communists, Zionists, Khomeiniists" and other foreign forces whose names were not mentioned, of instigating the events.

The events in Tunisia started on December 29th, the date when the decision to enact an increase in the price of bread, flour and other staples was announced. The city of Nakrawa, in the Saharan south, was the point from which the demonstrations and clashes started, later spreading to the four largest oases, as well as the cities of Al Kasrayn and Gafsa. The demonstrators were beset by the regime's forces, which led to the injury and death of at least 60 persons. When the Tunisian government first acknowledged the uprising, the Foreign Minister issued a statement accusing the unemployed, the lazy and enemy forces of being the instigators and spreaders of the protest. That, however, did not calm the situation. The Tunisian president was prompted to send a message over the local media, promising to freeze prices and prepare a new budget. Martial law, however, continued for a month, attesting to the regime's fear of the masses, whose problems will not be resolved by stop-gap measures.

In Morocco, the spark began from Agadeer and Anzaan and focused in the high schools, but the uprising was soon joined by broader sectors of the people and spread to the center of the country, to Marakash, Souwaiyra, Asfi, Jadida, Wajda, Rabat (the capital), Al Quinaitra, Al Khamaisiyal, Sidi Kasim, Wazan, Miknas, Fez, Taza, Al Nadour, Malila, Sabta and Casablanca, where almost three millions live and where there is the largest industrial compound in Morocco, as well as the largest expanse of shanty towns and poor workers neighborhoods. The regime's response was immediate and decisive, though shrouded by the news black-out. Still, the regime's forces were unable to stop the spread of the events, despite killing almost 200 people and injuring hundreds more. Appearing on television, King Hassan II announced the cancellation of price increases on basic consumer products. However, campaigns of arrest continued, covering many cities and villages. Schools and universities in the capital were closed, and some towns were blockaded for a number of days. Many issues of the opposition's newspapers were censored, and a number of opposition leaders were detained.

The main cause driving the masses in both Tunisia and Morocco to revolt is the constant decrease in their standard of liv- ▶

State of emergency in Tunis

ing. Lacking any genuinely democratic structures for redressing their grievances, they braved the permanent ban on demonstrations and took to the streets. The regimes have proved their incapacity to lesson the economic crisis, whose burdens fall on the shoulders of the majority of the people, for this crisis is rooted in the economic, class and political nature of the regimes themselves.

Fire under the sand

Although both regimes managed to crush the upheaval of the hungry, the contradictions are not resolved. Contrary to the claims of Bourguiba and King Hassan, class contradictions are growing. The symptoms which appeared in the last few months are those of a deep cleft between the poor majority and the rich elite in both countries, aggravated constantly by subordination to the world capitalist market. Both are mainly agricultural countries, and the majority of the working force is peasantry in structure. Subordination to the imperialist system makes both open markets for capitalist goods at the expense of local production, whether industrial or agricultural.

Internal class contradictions have been greatly augmented in recent years. This is tied to the influx of petro-dollars to the Arab world, starting in 1974, and the concurrent flourishing of the Arab comprador. Accordingly, the service sector has been inflated to the further detriment of agriculture and industry. As a result, massive migration from the countryside to the cities has occurred, with the migrants being channeled into work serving the comprador and service sector. This has led to further destruction of the process of accumulation of national capital, because an essential part of the returns go to the capitalist countries rather than being invested, or even accumulating, in the country itself.

The World Bank has pushed in the same direction by insisting on financing certain short-term and service projects, rather than long-term productive projects which could provide employment and accumulate national capital. Additional pressure from the International Monetary Fund's demands has led the regimes, to take measures, such as the price rises, which further depress the poor's living conditions.

The need for leadership

The basis reasons for which the hungry again rose up are still embedded in both societies, portending more revolts in the future. However, if the main lesson of the recent upheaval is not drawn, the results of any future uprising might be as catastrophic for the masses' struggle. The main lesson is that the progressive forces must organize themselves to lead the upheavals of the poor to their logical end. This requires the immediate establishment of a national democratic front, based on a program of social, economic and political dimensions. A front, armed with such a program, can lead the masses' struggle to victory, for the conditions are ripe in both countries for such a national democratic struggle. ●

Colloquium in Aden

The National Democratic Revolution

In mid-February, a three-day colloquium was held in Aden on the subject: The National Democratic Revolution — The Democratic Yemeni Experience. The colloquium was sponsored by the Yemeni Socialist Party, and attended by delegates from communist parties, newly independent countries, socialist countries and national liberation movements. In the following pages, we print parts of the presentation made by Comrade Ali Nasser Mohammad, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Yemeni Socialist Party, Chairman of the Presidium of the People's Supreme Assembly and Prime Minister of PDRY; This is followed by selections from the paper delivered by the Communist Party of Greece. In the next issue of "Democratic Palestine", we will print the paper delivered to the colloquium by the PFLP, as well as other coverage of the seminar.

Democratic Yemen

After welcoming the participants in the colloquium and stressing the importance of the gathering, Comrade Ali Nasser Mohammad presented a comprehensive evaluation of the entire course of the Yemeni revolution. Here we print a section which concentrates on the importance of the leadership of the national democratic revolution.

From the outset, the October 14th revolution had general subjective conditions that contributed to its triumph over colonialism and played a prominent role in its subsequent development. The revolution had its organized political vanguard of a revolutionary democratic composition, specific programme documents and advanced party traditions.

Moreover, the revolution depended upon a broad social base that included the workers, the peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the intellectuals in the countryside and the towns. All of these were the fundamental directing force of national liberation. What is especially significant is the fact that the broadening of the scope of the popular armed revolution and the increased rallying of the masses around it was closely linked to the growth of the leading role of the National Front Political Organisation which gave embodiment to the alliance of these social forces. The National Front Political Organisation played its leading role by relying upon the toiling popular masses during the national liberation stage. It used a number of methods and forms of political and military struggle simultaneously, building a People's Liberation Army in the rural areas and forming commando groups in the towns, alongside its prominent role in the leadership of the trade unions and the founding of students and womens organisations and work within the sports, national and cultural clubs.

We can state that the October 14th revolution from the very beginning was founded without the participation of the political forces representing compradour and quasi-

feudalism and in isolation of the opportunist reformist political forces within the national movement. The distance kept by these reactionary forces from the revolution led to their complete exclusion from the national liberation movement and their fall in the swamp of concessions to the colonizer...This fact contributed to the crystallisation of the revolutionary democratic basis of the alliance of the toiling social classes with a genuine interest in national liberation and social progress. This was reflected in the revolution's political, class, ideological and organisational development. It was crowned with the accomplishment of the task of national independence on November 30th, 1967, which opened up before our people a path of broad horizons for marching towards subsequent revolutionary development. On this path, the process of the revolutionary democrats' move to the positions of the working class and the declaration of commitment to scientific socialism took place, following the liquidation of the petty bourgoisie's rightist tendencies, which nearly posed a serious new threat to the revolution following independence. This represented a fundamental factor in deepening the content of national power, consolidating social and economic transformations in society, and founding a firm revolutionary alliance between the segments of national progressive action which was personified in a tangible manner by the unity of the revolutionary forces within the framework of the Unified National Front Political Organisation. This unity was further consolidated with the foiling of the opportunist left tendencies that appeared at the level of the Yemeni working class party, the Yemeni Socialist Party, which today continues the leadership of the revolutionary process in our country towards completing the tasks of the stage of the national democratic revolution with socialist horizons.

Class leadership

Within this context, reference must be made anew to the fact that the resolution of the issue of the class leadership of the revolution, and refusal to compromise or hesitate in confronting all of the conspiracies and challenges that aimed at containing the revolution and draining it of its national democratic content, opened up the way for the maintenance and deepening of national independence, and the development of national democratic power of a socialist orientation, as the only path that ensures for the liberated countries the possibility of modernising the economic structures, developing the productive forces and improving the living standards of the peoples. It is not possible to return to those historic conditions under which the weak capitalist production relations in these countries could develop in an independent manner and undertake the historic national role played by contemporary capitalism when it appeared in forming nations and developed national states.

The setback of several national liberation revolutions has proved that without pursuing a path of socialist-orientated development, the national liberation movement that accomplished the task of independence cannot continue with the building of a national democratic state that would undertake the defence of national independence and realize social and economic progress. This is so because colonialism not only acted to destroy the fundamental productive forces in the colonies, but also perpetuated in these countries backward and weak types of production relations - most of which are pre-capitalism ones. The according of opportunities for the development of these relations after national independence can lead to the creation of a parasitic class structure characterized by disfiguration and subservience to world imperialism politically, economically and intellectually, and damage to the independence, economy and national culture of these countries.

In our country this issue appeared in a sharp manner following national independence. It was in the forefront of vital issues for which struggle was waged after independence. There was firm and determined confrontation of the rightist tendencies of some representatives of social segments that participated in the national alliance upon which the October 14th revolution rested, when it began by virtue of the requirements of the principal contradiction between colonialism and its lackeys on the one hand, and the popular masses with their various national and social classes and segments hostile to colonialism on the other hand. All of these issues were the focus of the work of the Fourth Congress of the National Front Political Organisation held in March, 1968, i.e. just a few months after independence. The progressive stream in the National Front was able to express its perception of the tasks and horizons of the new stage. This was personified by the Congress coming out with progressive resolutions that aimed at the deepening of the revolutionary democratic content of the National Front Political Organisation, the consolidation of its leading role and the building of a power with democratic institutions and progressive laws expressing the interests of the broadest toiling masses through the realisation of democratic agrarian reform, the building of mass and professional organisations, the purging of the state organs by removal of anti-revolution elements, replacing the command of the old army with that of the Liberation Army, nationalisation of foreign companies and banks, and the pursuance of a liberation foreign policy.

However, the rightist trend, which had failed in influencing the resolutions of the Fourth Congress, undertook on March 20 - i.e. just after a fortnight - a reactionary coup aimed at freezing the resolutions of the Fourth Congress and halting the internal life of the National Front Political Organisation, by allying with the command of the old army. This resulted in the perpetuation of individualism and revanchist tribal trends.

Corrective move

Despite all that, it was possible to save the revolution from disfiguration and loss by virtue of the constant principled stands and relentless struggle of the militants of the progressive stream in the National Front, with the backing of the popular masses...The conflict with the rightist trend was decided with the June 22, 1969 Corrective Move which overthrew the reactionary right; this opened the path for continuing the march towards completion of the tasks of the national democratic revolution stage; it paved the way for the participation of the other national action segments in the power and the mass organisations, and regained for the National Front Political Organisation its progressive class struggle role.

The June 22nd Move constituted an important historic stride in the march of the Yemeni revolutionary movement's development on the basis of adherence to scientific socialism, the consolidation of the organisation's leading role and strengthening and developing the militant party values and traditions, based on the principles of collective leadership and democratic centralism. This provided the necessary conditions for the deepening of the content of national power and its employment as an implement of social change.

With the convening of the Fifth and Sixth Congresses of the National Front Political Organisation in 1972 and 1975, the October 14th revolution entered a new stage in the course of its progressive development. In these two congresses, adherence to the ideology of scientific socialism was clearly determined. The fundamentals of leading and directing the revolutionary process were formulated through the adoption of the programme of the stage of the national democratic revolution. The programme defined the tasks and aims of this ▶

transitional stage and determined its fundamental class forces. The internal regulations, adopted and developed at these two congresses, provided broader possibilities for the consolidation of the best national party traditions and their development, through benefitting from the experience of the working class parties. For the first time in our country, party and political work were linked to the society's economic life. This takes place through the founding of party and primary mass organisations in the various places of work, production and study and in the armed forces. The relations of the national democratic alliance between the National Front Political Organisation, the Peoples's Democratic Union and the People's Vanguard Party, on the basis of adherence to scientific socialist thought and the programme of the stage of the national democratic revolution, was rapidly consolidated. This alliance was crowned with the convening of the Unification Congress and the founding of the Unified National Front Political Organisation on October, 1975, which paved the way for the founding of the Yemeni Socialist Party in October, 1978, as the party of the Yemeni working class and its allies.

In the context of the experience of the October 14th revolution, there appears before us the fact that the issue of power in our country was determined by virtue of the success of our party in its construction, leadership and practice as an instrument for the realisation, protection and deepening of economic, social, cultural and legal transformations. (The party's role was instrumental in) the provision of the necessary conditions for social progress through the nationalisation of the foreign monopolist companies and banks following the June 22, 1969 Corrective Move, the implementation of the agrarian reform law; nationalisation of housing, and the building of the state sector and consolidation of its leading role in the various branches of the national economy. All of this led to a change in the class composition of society in favour of the working masses...

Greek Communist Party

The delegate of the Communist Party of Greece opened his speech by saluting the Yemeni Socialist Party and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. His presentation then focused on certain aspects of the national democratic revolution, including the following:

We know the reasons why we communists do not speak about the national bourgeois revolution, but about the national democratic revolution, by which we mean a limited phase in the march of the socialist revolution, which has been defined on the basis of a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the contradictions in the concerned countries. This phase is not separated from the following phase of socialist revolution by any Chinese Wall. Rather, it relates and interlinks the tasks of complete national independence with the objectives of social progress and economic development for the great majority of the people.

The very definition of the phase of national democratic revolution and its tasks, and the transformation of what emerges from it of slogans into a propelling force for the broad people's masses in the concerned countries, affirms not just the vanguard role, but also the leading role of the communist and workers parties in those countries, inspite of any subjective or objective weakness, or any mistakes that may occur. In this sphere I wish to indicate to the controversial relationship between the growth of the working class and the communist and workers party. If it is correct that the existence of a developing proletariat contributes to the growth of the role of the party, then, similarly, it is correct that the sound application of Marxism-Leninism permits the party of any country which has no such proletariat not only to avoid the negative effects resulting from that, but also to play its vanguard and leading role, as the vanguard of the proletariat which is on its way to growth in its country, and one of the groups of the world revolutionary movement of constantly wide and increasing influence.

We should not also forget that the revolutionary leadership in its two inseparable phases is nothing static, but constitutes a continuous process requiring continuous efforts not just for its confirmation in practical reality, but for its maintenance and development and the broadening of its scope further with activity and continuous initiatives under the changing circumstances of the struggle. Here too, it enjoys the creative use of the revolutionary weapon of Marxism-Leninism, especially in the sphere of alliances with decisive significance...

The second point I would like to touch on is not the role of the petit bourgeoisie in the phase of the national democratic revolution. (This class), and especially the peasants, remains the natural ally of the working class. (Rather, I speak of) a certain section of the petit bourgeoisie that was able, in certain circumstances, to reach authority. As this section is made up of, in general, possessors of free trades and senior employees and military men, we find that the tendency of the petit bourgeois aspiration to escape from the petit bourgeois situation and move to the bourgeois situation is expressed in this section as extreme elitism, individualism, and tyranny. I call it a section, for in the final analysis it does not even represent the petit bourgeoisie in totality, as a class.

In my opinion, this section has no relation with revolutionary democrats... nor was it revolutionary democratic and then transformed, inspite of the fact that in some countries this section is made up under revolutionary democratic authority and plays a role in overthrowing them, or assumes authority after their losing the various causes. Due to its petit bourgeois origin, this section does not possess any capital of its own, thus giving full freedom to "the individual initiative"; and this in my view is the constancy of its stand on nationalisation of foreign capital, although this forms the sole way of achieving its aspiration of climbing the social ladder.

I will not list here the changes that took place in the stands of this section in the course of the consolidation of its position in authority, as the documents of various other fraternal parties concerned touch on this in detail, but I wish to indicate especially to its transition from the alleged adoption of scientific socialism to the emergence of the "(special) features," and talk about "national socialism" concerned, and also transition in some countries to speak about the "third way" between capitalism and socialism, as they exist, and also the stand on the strategic alliance with the Soviet Union, on the theory of the "two great powers"...

At the end, permit me to repeat something that never loses its great and decisive significance, which is the need for supporting and strengthening the unity of the world revolutionary movement, considering it the main condition for setting up the broadest front against imperialism and its aggressive plots. ●

Continuity in the Soviet Union

While deeply sorrowed by the death of Comrade Andropov, we congratulate the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the election of Comrade Konstantin U. Chernenko as Secretary of the Central Committee. We congratulate the entire Soviet people on the election of a new Supreme Soviet. We have every reason for retaining full confidence in the continuity of the Soviet Union's principled positions, whether concerning the conflict in our area, or other vital domestic and international issues.

Though indirectly and inadvertently, the standing of the Soviet Union was even confirmed by the virulent campaign waged by the imperialist media on the occasion of Comrade Andropov's death and the election of his successor. Failing to find real symptoms of disarray in the Soviet leadership, the US press in particular resorted to unsubstantiated insinuations and pounced on details as if they had great political importance. Such shoddy journalism appeared in the same pages that reported "Moslem gangs invading West Beirut", as if the nationalist forces who liberated the city did not even live there, much less enjoy broad popular support for challenging the regime's repressive army. In a more subtle attack, Comrade Andropov was depicted as a leader who died before he left his mark on Soviet policy and whose initiatives will now be lost. Both are examples of self-serving distortion of the character of those who challenge imperialism's plans.

Comrade Andropov became a special target of imperialism and its media because of his sharply defined stands against the Reagan Administration's military build-up and threat of nuclear holocaust. These same stands made him an exceptional leader in the eyes of all progressive forces and oppressed peoples fighting imperialism. The basic point, however, is that Comrade Andropov built his policy on the foundation of the Soviet Union's historical opposition to imperialism, and this policy will be continued under the leadership of Comrade Chernenko. For this reason, the efforts to exploit the change in the Soviet leadership to the advantage of imperialism's global offensive will fail. Continuity in the Soviet remains as an important support for all those struggling for freedom, democracy, peace and socialism.

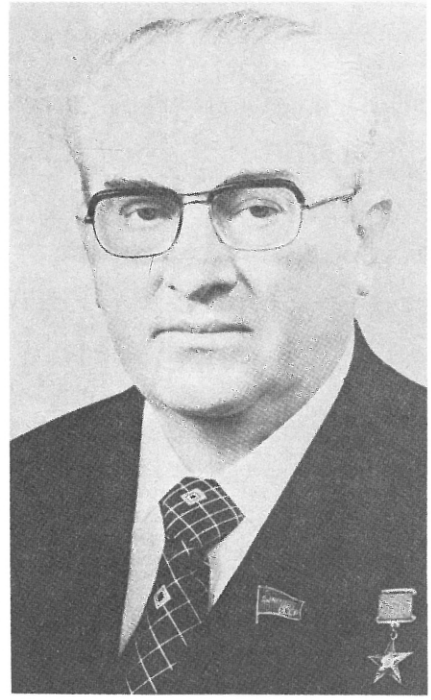
Condolences on Comrade Andropov's Death

On the occasion of the death of the great leader Uri Andropov, Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, sent the following telegram of condolences to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, on February 11th:

Proletarian internationalist greetings

On the occasion of the death of the dear comrade, Uri Andropov, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and President of the Supreme Soviet Presidium, who was true to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, communism and peace, I offer you the deepest condolences on behalf of the PFLP's Central Committee, cadres, members and militants. We are confident that you, your people and government, are able to overcome all difficulties, and march forward along the path paved by Comrade Andropov against imperialism, racism and reaction, and for progress, liberation and peace.

Under the leadership of Comrade Andropov, your party adhered to principled, solid and courageous stands concerning the attempts of the US, its NATO allies and their puppets — the reactionaries and dictators, to impose the logic of force and reverse the movement of history in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. This position is clear evidence of your sincerity and adherence to the principles laid down by the great Comrade Lenin on the questions of war and peace.



We view your and Comrade Andropov's stands and steps as an example and guide in our common struggle against imperialism, Zionism and reaction in our Arab area. Our struggle is intensifying against the direct US presence in Lebanon, the Zionist occupation of a part of Lebanon and Syria and all of Palestine, and the direct US support to 'Israel', which was recently consolidated in their strategic agreement. The struggle against these enemies is achieving new victories that rubbed the nose of imperialism and Zionism in the mud. These victories would not have been possible were it not for our people's steadfastness, and the support of our Arab and international allies, in particular the honorable aid offered by the socialist community, first and foremost the Soviet Union.

Again I offer our deepest sympathies and most sincere condolences. I wish to stress that we stand with you in the struggle against imperialism, Zionism, racism, and reaction, in order that the banner of democracy, socialism and communism be raised high.

- **Long Live the great Soviet Communist Party.**
- **Long Live the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.**
- **The struggling people will be victorious.**

Angola 1983, Lebanon 1982
Same Story, Same Aggressor

Today the racist regime in South Africa is facing a multi-faceted challenge:

— Internally, the African National Congress continues to advance in the context of overall mass opposition to apartheid and the capitalist super-exploitation it ensures. This past year, the ANC has clearly exhibited its rising military capacity. Moreover, the formation of the multiracial United Democratic Front, with goals similar to those of the ANC, gave political expression to the snowballing popular resistance to Pretoria's policies.

— In occupied Namibia, SWAPO is continuing its liberation war in defiance of Pretoria's recurrent claims to have "crippled the terrorists". SWAPO's mass base remains firm, as does its international status as the sole, legitimate representative of the Namibian people.

— Despite ongoing South African-instigated destabilization attempts, Angola and Mozambique retain their determination to support SWAPO and ANC, and to work for the socio-economic progress of their own people. The very existence of these popular, revolutionary governments is perceived as a threat by the South African racists, because of the example thus provided to the African masses fighting apartheid and occupation.

New invasion

This past December, the Pretoria regime set out on a new military venture, intended to settle accounts with these challenges once and for all. Up to 2,000 South African troops, supported by air raids and artillery, including internationally forbidden chemical shells, pushed far into Angolan territory. Announced as a preemptive raid against SWAPO guerrillas, the invasion was actually an attempt to undermine Angola's independent policy. This was the rationale for massive death and destruction, inflicted first and foremost on civilians.

Many parallels can be drawn between the latest South African invasion and the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Most significant is that, in both cases, it was actually US imperialism's war that was being pursued. Behind Pretoria's drive for "security" lie vital US economic and strategic interests.

For one, US investment in South Africa is much greater than normally assumed. "Instead of 2.6 billion (officially noted direct investments), total US financial involvement is probably in excess of $14.6 billion... 250 of the 'Fortune 500' biggest US corporations maintain subsidiaries of affiliates in South Africa... US investors own 57% of all foreign holdings of the Johannesburg stock exchange in gold mines, mining houses, platinum mines, Debeers and Palamin. Among these investors is US CIA Director William Casey." (AfricAsia, January 1984, citing US agencies' internal studies).

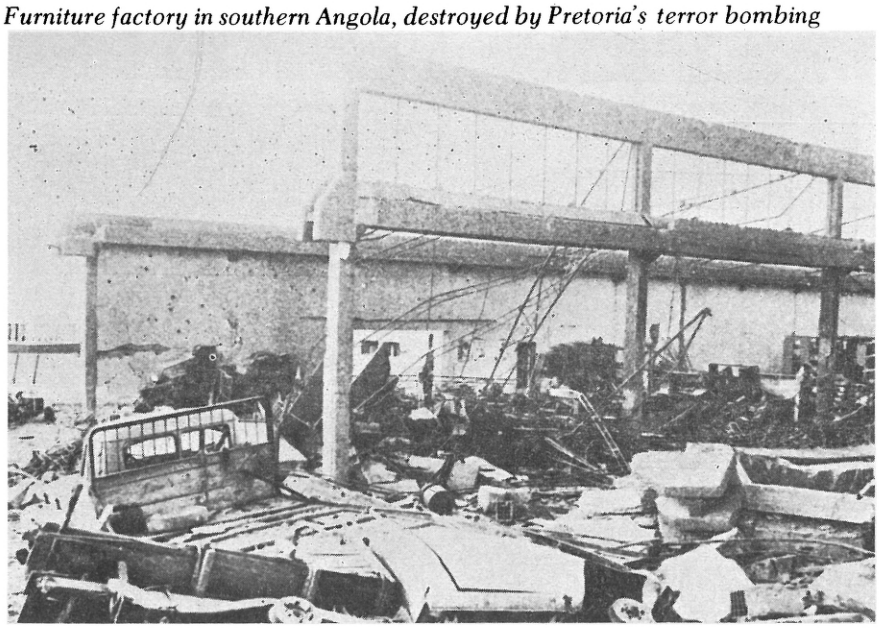
Here one is reminded that in December 1982, South African soldiers massacred over forty persons in Lesotho, in a raid purportedly directed against ANC members. This occurred just after Casey visited Pretoria with a CIA report warning of ANC's growing influence, which the report termed a threat to the US policy of "constructive engagement" with the South African regime. Later, South African radio reported that the US and South Africa had reached a mutual agreement whereby Pretoria intervenes in neighboring countries as the US does in Central America (Swedish left newspaper, *Proletaren*, May 1983).

This corresponds to imperialism's need for a garrison state to protect its interests in southern Africa, as the Zionist state does in the Middle East. More specifically, the current invasion was intended to enforce the US condition that Cuban troops withdraw from Angola before Namibia's independence can be determined, this in accordance with the Reagan Administration's global anti-communist crusade.

US diplomacy "to the rescue"

However, the South African troops met concerted resistance from the Angolan armed forces, and hundreds of young Angolans flocked into militias to defend their country. Like 'Israel' in Lebanon, Pretoria tasted the difficulties of imposing its retrograde political aims through military conquest alone. The racists themselves admitted more fatalities among their troops than in any military campaign since 1975, and officials spoke openly of the fact that South Africa could not bear the economic burden of the invasion or of sustaining the destabilization

Furniture factory in southern Angola, destroyed by Pretoria's terror bombing



campaigns against Angola and Mozambique.

The disengagement offered by Pretoria, at the same time its planes were still murderously bombing Angolan towns, was the signal for a US diplomatic rescue mission. By the time Pretoria's ceasefire went into effect at the end of January, Chester Crocker, US Undersecretary of State for African Affairs, had begun his shuttle diplomacy to all involved African parties. Crocker's mission is like the service which US envoy Philip Habib profferred to 'Israel' during the 1982 battle of Beirut. He is assigned to cover South African failure to comply with the UN Security Council resolutions demanding immediate, unconditional withdrawal from Angola, not to mention the UN plan for Namibia's independence. Instead US diplomacy aims to extract the results it wants from South Africa's aggression, just as the Reagan plan was launched in the wake of PLO withdrawal from Beirut.

In the interests of warding off Pretoria's sabotage, neither Angola nor SWAPO rejected the idea of a ceasefire at the Angolan border. However, Angola has made it clear that Namibia's independence is not conditional on the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. SWAPO dismissed the US initiatives as "a diplomatic ploy intended to hoodwink the people of Namibia" and vowed to continue its people's war until terminating the occupation fully. Due to imperialism and Pretoria's determination to maintain their exploitation of African people and resources, the undeclared war in southern Africa will surely be a protracted one. However, we remind that 'Israel', the US and reactionary forces have yet to achieve their aims in Lebanon, despite massive aggression. The enemy tactics, and then its strategy, will ultimately fail in southern Africa, and the people of South Africa and Namibia will join their Angolan and Mozambican brothers in freedom.

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'Israel' and Africa

South African troops - the Israeli army's counterpart

"...beyond the Arab countries... we must expand the field of Israel's strategic and security concerns in the eighties to include countries like Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and areas like the Persian Gulf and Africa, and in particular the countries of North and Central Africa."

— Israeli Defense Minister Sharon, 1981 (as printed in "Davar", December 18, 1981, and translated in "Journal of Palestine Studies", No. 43, Spring 1982, p. 167)

Though Sharon never delivered the lecture wherein these words figured, Zionist penetration of Africa is a reality, driven along by the Israeli state's own ambitions and its strategic alliance with US imperialism. Zaire's restoration of diplomatic relations in May 1982, marked official Israeli reentry into the center of the continent. This was the first fruit of the Camp David accords on the African level. Among the aims of the pact between the US, 'Israel' and the Egyptian regime was to provide for Israeli economic and military expansion into the Middle East and Africa. Sadat offered Egypt as the bridge, concretely by normalizing relations with the Zionist state, and politically by reneging on the platform whereby almost all Black African states had broken relations with 'Israel' in 1973. The southern flank of the continent did not need to be mentioned by Sharon; 'Israel' had long ago established a foothold there, through close military and economic cooperation with the apartheid regime in South Africa.

After the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli accord had confirmed Egyptian recognition of the Zionist state and brought the Sinai pullout within sight, David Kimche, Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, made a number of trips to Africa to pave the way for reestablishing diplomatic ties. In November 1981, Sharon secretly visited Gabon, Zaire, Ivory Coast, Cen- ▶

tral African Republic, Nigeria and South Africa. The next month, while in Washington negotiating the original US-Zionist strategic alliance agreement, Sharon conferred with Zaire's Mobutu, who then announced that he would resume diplomatic relations with 'Israel' and anticipated that others would follow suit. The following fall, then Foreign Minister Shamir had secret meetings in New York with African officials, and the following summer in Geneva. Back in 'Israel', Shamir could boast, "Hardly a week goes by when there isn't someone here from Africa" (*Jerusalem Post*, August 7, 1983). So far, only Liberia has officially followed Zaire's example, but this beginning has cemented the Tel Aviv-Pretoria-Zaire-US alliance, pivotal for imperialism's plans in the region.

Victims of the South African raid on Matola, 1983

Zionism's place in neocolonialism

Aside from their own efforts, there are three factors that have facilitated the Zionists' comeback in Africa: (1) the nature of the neocolonial African regimes, (2) Arab reaction's politics, and (3) US imperialism's global offensive.

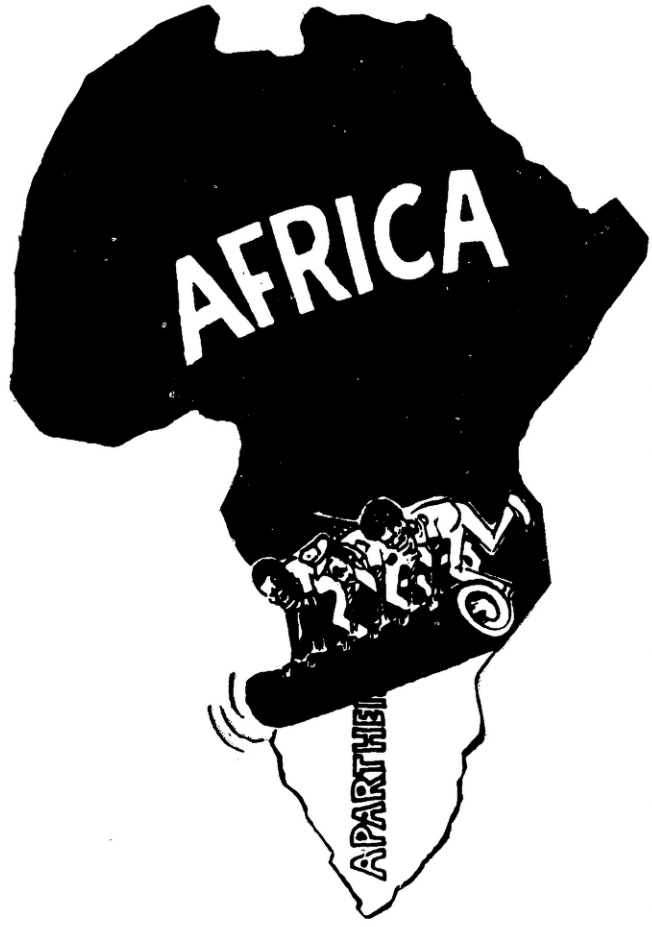
While there is sympathy for the Palestinian and Arab cause among the African people, the neocolonial regimes are most concerned with maintaining their own positions of power. Generally speaking, these regimes lack a viable program for confronting the socioeconomic problems inherited from colonial rule, much less the discriminatory workings of the imperialist-dominated world market. They are thus highly dependent on foreign aid. It is these conditions which 'Israel' exploited when originally infiltrating Africa in the fifties and sixties. In this period, the Zionist state provided expertise in agriculture, education, construction and services. Posing as a fellow developing country with humanitarian aims, 'Israel' sent 2,763 experts to Africa between 1958 and 1971, and trained almost 7,000 Africans in occupied Palestine (*Near East Report*, January 21, 1983). The bulk of funding for these projects came from the US; 'Israel' served as the conduit, getting imperialism's foot in the door of countries that were sceptical of dealing with the big powers. The US's specific interest in this 'third country' approach was countering the influence of Nasser and the tendency of newly independent countries to turn to the socialist community for aid.

In the early seventies, with the rising power of OPEC and in the context of 'third world' countries seeking more equitable terms within the imperialist system, neocolonial African regimes found it opportune to align with official Arab positions. This trend reached a climax when most African states broke diplomatic relations with 'Israel'.

Covert Zionist presence

Figures reveal the limits of the political positions taken by such states at the UN and elsewhere. In the decade after 1973, Israeli-African trade tripled. The details of this figure show which side was benefitting: 'Israel' exported over three times what it imported from Africa. As of 1983, 'Israel' had economic ties with twenty African nations in the absence of diplomatic relations. More Israelis (at least 4,000) now work in Africa than in 1973, with Israeli economic presence concentrated in Kenya, Ivory Coast and Nigeria; more than 400 Israeli firms operate in Lagos through various 'fronts'. Israeli involvement in these countries includes major infrastructure projects. In the absence of diplomatic ties, 'Israel' has maintained interests sections in other embassies in Zaire, Kenya, Togo, Gabon and Ivory Coast.

From the start, the Histadrut, the Zionist colonial enterprise which poses as a trade union, played a central role in Israeli involvement. Such a cover for spreading Zionist influence among African workers and youth was especially convenient in the period of no official ties. Today, Histadrut prides itself on not having relations with the white South African trade



MPLA soldier guarding a factory against enemy sabotage

unions, even though it has itself practiced a similarly racist policy against Palestinians. Instead the Histadrut works to establish contacts with the black trade unions in South Africa, as a showcase example of "progressiveness" to counter the real phenomenon of close Zionist-Pretoria cooperation. Last summer's course in cooperative enterprises, the 52nd of its kind sponsored by the Histadrut's Afro-Asian Institute, was attended by participants from 21 countries which have no diplomatic relations with 'Israel'; half of these were from Africa.

Since the fifties, with and without diplomatic ties, military cooperation has also occurred. In fact, serious researchers on the subject contend that this is the most significant aspect of Israeli involvement in Africa, but the details are most often kept secret by both sides. It is known that 'Israel' trained Zaire's brutal secret police in the years when the two countries had no diplomatic relations.

More recently, Israel Military Industries (state-owned) supplied Nigeria's police with guns for supervising the fradulent August 1983 elections, after a deal with the US fell through because Nigeria lacked the hard cash for advance payment. The Israeli state backed this transaction with a £4 million export credit, showing the importance attached to the arms market in Africa.

Arab reaction's responsibility

The shallowness of the neocolonial African regimes' break with 'Israel' is also predicated on the hypocrisy involved in much of official Arab politics, due to the domination of Arab reaction. It is well-known that the Arab boycott of 'Israel' is not impecably observed by all, and some of the violations are deliberate. For example, one could read in the newspaper last year that Saudi Arabia is buying Israeli irrigation equipment through European dealers (*Los Angeles Times*, November 13, 1983). On what basis can a more stringent position be exacted from other countries, especially those whose economic and political maneuverability is much less than that of Saudi Arabia?

The other aspect of Arab reaction's responsibility lies in the policy of OPEC as led by Saudi Arabia. This has aimed at further integrating the oil-producing states in the imperialist system, and thus precluded any genuine 'third world' solidarity. It was the poorer African countries, much more than the capitalist ones, that suffered from the rise in oil prices. Though some Arab oil-producers committed substantial aid to African countries, this was never sufficient to offset the economic difficulties imposed by these countries' bottom-ranking in the imperialist hierarchy.

US imperialism's offensive

The most compelling force behind the Zionist comeback in Africa is, very simply, imperialism's increasingly aggressive global offensive, led by the US. It is telling that the two African leaders who stepped forward to publicly embrace the Zionist state are unconditionally pro-US. Liberia's Samuel Doe was trained by the US Special Forces in 1979, before taking power in the 1980 coup. Mobutu of Zaire is a virtual imperialist agent. His first coup was the 1960 CIA operation in the Congo (Zaire's former name), which ousted the popular nationalist leader, Patrice Lumumba. In 1963, Mobutu was trained as a paratrooper in 'Israel'. His 1965 rise to power was also CIA-sponsored, and CIA operative Robert Devlin "remains in Kin-

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Liberia

Military concerns also rank high in the renewed Liberian-Israeli ties. Before arriving in occupied Palestine in August 1983, to embrace the Zionist leadership, Liberian President Samuel Doe had sent a team to Tel Aviv to see what kind of information the Israeli intelligence service would devulge on alleged Libyan intentions in his country and elsewhere in Africa. Doe has also been drawn in on the imperialist side in Chad since then. In addition to making agreements for Israeli aid in the fields of agriculture, transportation and finance, Doe's regime purchased four Arava transport planes. This meted $10 million for the Israeli Aircraft Industries.

shasa as Mobutu's most trusted adviser" (*Journal of Palestine Studies*, No. 47, Spring 1983, p. 48).

Zaire, with its great expanse and centrally strategic location, can provide a springboard for the Washington-Pretoria-Tel Aviv axis to broaden its interference in Africa. Mobutu has previously joined in this axis' endeavors, for example, by supporting Holden Roberto's FNLA against the legitimate MPLA government at the time of Angola's independence, while Pretoria supported UNITA to the same end. Presently, Zaire is the only African nation contributing troops to the US-French intervention in Chad. Now Mobutu's role will be expanded to complement Pretoria's aggression against its neighbors, which has increased in step with the Reagan Administration's policy of "constructive engagement" vis-a-vis the apartheid regime.

Moreover, Zaire's restoration of diplomatic relations provided the basis for others to do the same. While this process has been somewhat retarded as a result of the Zionist state's following invasion and occupation in Lebanon, the Zionists can easily make contact with willing African states in Kinshasa, as in January 1983, when Sharon met representatives of Kenya, Uganda, Central African Republic, Tanzania and Chad.

Zaire's Zionization

To secure the linchpin of the reactionary axis, the Zionist state has undertaken a total revamping of Zaire's armed forces. This is in accordance with a five-year plan agreed upon when Sharon, accompanied by an entourage of 90, including military aides and two generals, visited Zaire in January 1983. In advance, Avrahim Tamir, head of strategic planning in the Israeli Defense Ministry, had visited Zaire several times and drawn up a master plan for reorganizing, retraining and reequipping Zaire's 20,000 armed and security forces. As Sharon described the project: "It's on the level of Zaire's national security" (*Jerusalem Post*, January 23, 1983).

The other plan agreed upon at that time, for 'Israel' to establish a Presidential guard for Mobutu, is already accomplished. Initially, 'Israel' supplied Zaire with $8 million worth of arms to this purpose. Under the new pact, 'Israel' is supplying Zaire with helicopters, tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, light arms, radar systems, warships, electronic security fences and spy planes, and donating arms captured in Lebanon in 1982. In the spring of 1983, *Afrique-Asie* reported that the Israeli government was negotiating the establishment of Israeli air bases in Zaire. In the same period, TASS reported that 4,000 Israeli servicemen are to build a US cruise missile base in Zaire.

The focal point in reorganizing Zaire's "national security" is Shaba (formerly Katanga) province. This area is vital not only to Mobutu but to imperialism as well, because of its mineral wealth. (Zaire is the world's biggest producer of industrial diamonds and cobalt and has substantial copper deposits). Shaba has also been the scene of popular uprisings in 1977 and 1978, which Mobutu could only quell with the help of Moroccan, French and Belgium troops. While in Zaire, Sharon flew over the border areas with Angola and inspected the 12,000-men Camaniola brigade (over half Zaire's military manpower) which guards the Kolwezi mines. In addition to undertaking the establishment of a new 5,000-men division to safeguard the mines, two battalions of commandos are to be deployed along the frontier with Angola.

'Israel' may also be involved in a whole infrastructural project: "The governor of Shaba province said he would like to see established a line of settlements, similar to the IDF Nahal units of farmer-pioneer-soldiers, having the responsibility for area defence such as is assigned to Israel border settlements" (*Jerusalem Post*, January 20, 1983).

Israeli military involvement in Zaire fits neatly into its cooperation with Pretoria, bolstering the apartheid regime's campaign to encircle Angola, harass Mozambique, and stave off the liberation of Namibia and of the South African masses. Israeli aid is also vital if Mobutu is to be kept in power in the long run, for opposition to his dictatorship is growing and there are recurrent guerrilla activities. The Front for the Restoration of Congolese Democracy issued a statement from Belgium that "a secret plan involving Zaire, Israel and South Africa lies behind the Sharon visit." At the same time, the Angola News Agency charged that Israeli military experts had been sent to Namibia to train UNITA counterrevolutionaries operating against the MPLA government. This marks an escalation of long-standing Israeli military and logistics aid to the South African occupation troops fighting SWAPO. It was also noteworthy that the spy plane shot down by Mozambique in May 1983, in conjunction with South Africa's air raid on Matola, near Maputo, was of Israeli design.

To Our Readers:

Join Our Efforts to Expose Zionist Activities

In the first issue of *Democratic Palestine*, we printed a study about the role of 'Israel' as imperialism's surrogate and arms merchant in Latin America. In this issue we deal with the Israeli role in Africa. An important feature of our anti-Zionist position is awareness that the Palestinian and Arab people are not the sole targets of Zionist aggression and expansion. Besides its world-wide activities in pursuit of hegemony in our area, Zionism occupies a distinct slot in imperialism's global strategy. Thus, the Zionist state is ultimately aligned with those forces who try to hold back the people's march towards freedom, progress, democracy and socialism, in whatever corner of the world.

We would like to make the examination of Zionism's global role a regular feature in *Democratic Palestine*. To this end, we call for contributions from our friends and readers who may have access to specific information about Zionist activities in their country or region. Please join our effort by sending a study or article, or selected pieces of information, examples, an overview of Zionist influence and organization, etc., which our staff can work into a composite article. Official Israeli activities are of interest whether in the field of politics, commerce, media, military or intelligence. Non-official Zionist activities, lobbies, front organizations, etc., are also relevant. All areas of the world, historical as well as current aspects, are relevant, including enrichment of what we have already printed on Latin America and Africa.

Please send your contribution to *Democratic Palestine*, Box 12144, Damascus, Syria. Note: We reserve the right to edit, shorten and select from among the material we receive. Please specify whether or not you want your contribution credited and if so, to what name.

'Israel' - the go-between

A closer examination of current Israeli-Zaire relations reveals distinct parallels to the Israeli role as imperialism's surrogate and arms merchant in Latin America. The Reagan Administration is anxious to increase military aid to Zaire, but has run into Congressional opposition due to Mobutu's horrible human rights record. Also, the imperialists are wary of the corrupt and near bankrupt state of Zaire's economy (despite, or rather because of, Mobutu's having amassed a personal fortune that runs in the billions). Mobutu hoped that by reestablishing relations with 'Israel', he could get the help of the Zionist lobby in influencing the US Congress. The Zionist lobby has complied, but even if their efforts don't bear fruit, 'Israel' can serve as a conduit for US aid. "In view of the Reagan Administration's policy to increase military aid to Zaire above the originally proposed $20 million, and of Mobutu's subsequent rejection of US aid, it would not be surprising if covert CIA funding of Israeli arms sales and assistance to Zaire are already in process" (*Journal of Palestine Studies*, No. 47, Spring 1983, p. 47).

In the coming issue of "Democratic Palestine", we will conclude this study by examining Israeli relations with the bantustans of South Africa.

For further information...

For a more thorough review and evaluation, see "Zaire and Israel: An American Connection", by Najib J. Hakim and Richard P. Stevens, *Journal of Palestine Studies* No. 47, Spring 1983, p. 41. Obtained from: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, P.O. Box 19449, Washington D.C. 20036, USA.

Profiteers of Reagan's Arms Build-up
The US General Electric Company

by Wieland Orth

The following study is reprinted by permission from "Panorama: Artikel Kommentare", the press agency of the German Democratic Republic.

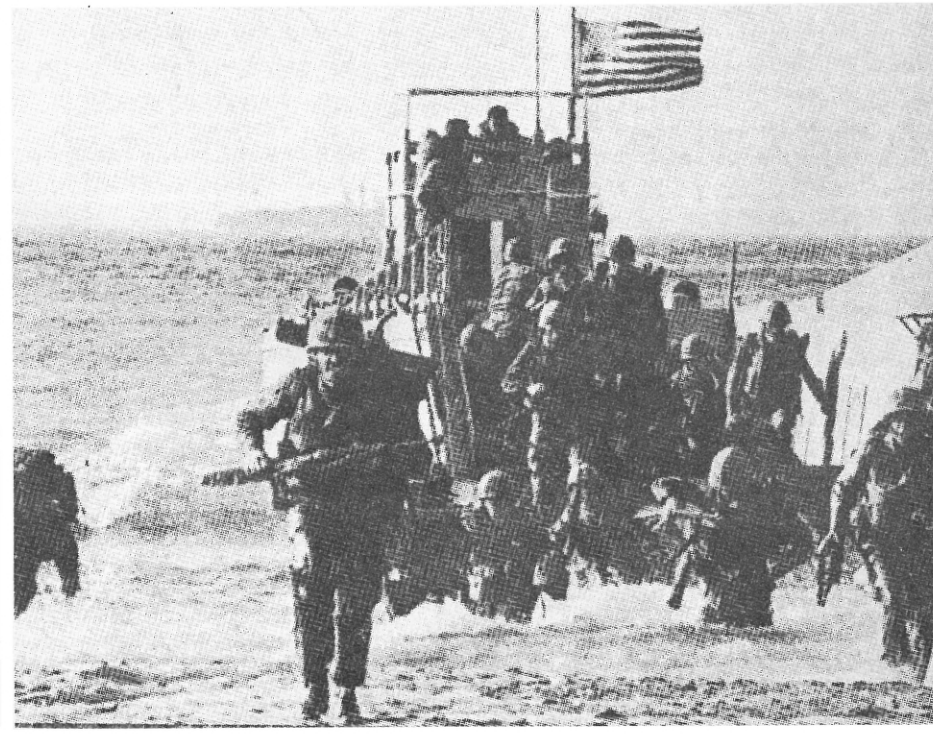
First and foremost, the US General Electric (GE) company extolls products serving "human progress", such as educational facilities, environmental control mechanisms and medical devices for fighting cancer. In so doing, the company wants to make the public believe that it is "peace-loving". If possible, they camouflage the fact that they manufacture a wide variety of armaments.

Wide-ranging production for arms build-up

In reality GE has been one of the big earners from the arms deals for many years. It ranked fifth amongst the Pentagon's main contractors with an arms production turnover of $2,200 million in 1980, and fourth with $3,000 million in 1981. The 1982 internal GE company report stated, "Top-quality technology has made General Electric one of the leading US armament contractors; many of its space products and aircraft engines are of vital importance to national security. "National security" - its managers, too, are good at paraphrasing a relentless and unrestrained arms build-up. On the one hand, this company has a decisive influence on governmental policies. On the other hand, it benefits enormously from Reagan's policy of confrontation, from involvement in the development and production of the first-strike weapons directed against the Soviet Union, the other socialist countries and against the progressive third world countries. Together with other arms manufacturers, it creates the military and technological prerequisites needed to wage and win a nuclear war, through which the US intends to attain world domination.

As to the US nuclear build-up, Western media always mentions five companies imperative to this. General Electric is on top of the tree, being in monopoly control over significant areas concerned with nuclear energy sections, principally nuclear warheads and reactors for warships and submarines, a market which is shared between GE and Westinghouse.

Pratt & Whitney (United Technologies) and GE are the leading US aircraft suppliers. Thus the ultra-modern ▶



McDonnell Douglas F-18 Hornet has an F-404 engine produced by GE. These F-18s are supplied to the US Navy and Marine Corps, as well as to the armed forces of Canada, Australia and Spain. GE also manufactures engines for Northrop's F-56 Tigershark, which is mainly produced for export. The company further provides the highly sophisticated radar and "mission display" for this aircraft. "Over-the-horizon radars" are manufactured for the US Air Force.

On top of this, the company provides the engines for the following military aircraft: the Grumman F-14 and General Dynamics F-16 combat aircraft, and the Boeing flight refuelling tanker KC-135, the McDonnell Douglas extended cargo aircraft KC-10, serving the Rapid Deployment Force which is charged with protecting "vital US interests" anywhere in the world.

Rockwell International's B-1 strategic bomber and the new version of the Lockheed large capacity transport aircraft C-5B Galaxy will be equipped with GE engines too. GE was one of the companies decisively involved in the Vietnam war by producing installations for strategic bombers. Furthermore, the company supplies engines for the US Army Black Hawk combat helicopters and for Spruance and Aegis class battleships of the US Navy. The company was or is involved in the development and production of strategic nuclear missile systems such as Polaris, Poseidon, Minuteman, Trident and MX. In this context, GE mainly develops and produces the guidance systems.

In 1980, the company installed its first three-dimensional radar system in Belgium as part of NATO's spying system. In the field of space technology, the company became the main contractor for the development of the Landsat 4 satellite for NASA and DSCS III spy satellite. Small wonder that it is highly interested in Reagan's plans to militarize outer space.

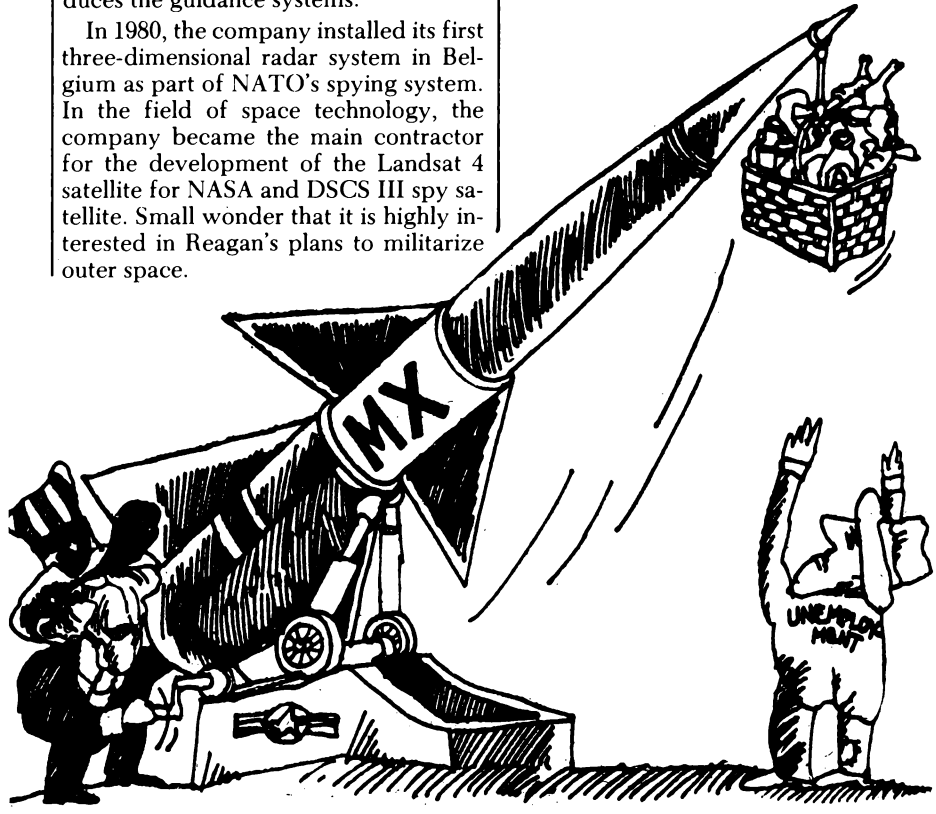
Armaments yield high profits for GE

Arms deals are highly profitable for the company. As a direct consequence of the US government's lunatic pursuit of confrontation and arms build-up, both the share of armaments in the overall turnover and the profits have grown unabatedly. Declared profits have risen from $338.9 million in 1966, to $1,817 million in 1982. Overall turnover increased 3.7 fold during the same period while the official gains, which by no means represent total company profits, rose 5.4 fold.

Even in the 1981 company report, the military activities of the company were emphasized as the principal source of increased profits. This development continued in 1982: Even though the overall turnover dropped by 7 per cent, profits went up by 10 per cent, the profit per share from $7.26 to $8.00; the dividend rose by 6 per cent up to $3.35, and the price of the company shares from $55 to $100.

According to the West German employers' paper *Capital* (January 1981), the price of GE shares has woken up from a "deep sleep" since Ronald Reagan was elected President.

General Electric has produced arms since 1896, when it supplied the first guns for the US Navy, and it has always been big business for the company. That is why, in 1944, the then GE president, Charles E. Wilson, was gravely concerned about the end of World War II. "What about war production in the USA when the war is over?" (*World of a Giant Corporation*, New York, 1975) he asked and demanded that the military "gets things going for a permanent war production" (*Army Ordnance Magazine*, March/April 1944).



As we see, the military and the politicians, the ideologists and company representatives of the military-industrial complex in the United States saw to it that Wilson's demand came true.

Close ties between state, military and GE

The company, which belongs to the Morgan group, is a typical example of the close ties existing between the arms industry, the military top brass and the governmental machine. Between 1954 and 1962, President Reagan was also on the company's payroll. His Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Samuel Pierce, was GE's Managing Director until 1979. On top of this, the company employs dozens of former officers who make profitable use of their connections and knowledge in the field of armament.

Three Secretaries of Defence who made sure GE got billion dollar orders were former members of the company's board of directors: Neil McElroy, Secretary of Defence between 1957 and 1959, Thomas Gate between 1959 and 1960, and Clark Clifford from 1968 till 1969. When, in the 1960s, the US allegedly had to fill an "existing missile gap as compared with the Soviet Union", GE, with Polaris and Minuteman missiles, was consequently amongst the main benefactors of the campaign to launch a new round of the arms race.

There is also a steady movement back and forth between top GE positions and the Pentagon. Thus Lewis T. Preston, for example, GE's Managing Director, is member of the Council on Foreign Relations, which is composed of leading figures from the economy and government and is "probably the private interest group exercising the strongest influence on American foreign policy" (*World of a Giant Corporation*, New York, 1975). Edward E. Hood, GE Vice Director, represents the company in the Aerospace Industries Association, and Jack Parker, also Vice Director, looks after GE's interests in the National Security Industrial Association, comprising 300 arms manufacturers.

Hence General Electric is tied up in various ways with the state and political centres of power, giant banks and the military. You can hardly find any better example of the anatomical structure of the military-industrial complex in the United States. ●

Muin Bseiso

Songs of Revolution and Life

The Palestinian cultural movement has lost one of its great leaders: The poet, Muin Bseiso, passed away on January 24th, after suffering a heart attack while in London, pursuing his nationalist duties. Announcement of the death was made by the General Secretariat of the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists, and by the PLO's Department of Information and Culture.

Bseiso made great contributions to our people's cause through his revolutionary nationalist poems. He offered many sacrifices for the sake of Palestine and other Arab national causes, always standing firm against the Zionist occupiers and their imperialist allies. By his consciousness as a revolutionary writer, he contributed much towards strengthening the PLO's ties of friendship and alliance with Arab and international liberation movements, and with the Soviet Union and the socialist community. In this respect, his work was based on awareness that, though our just cause will be victorious, this victory cannot be achieved without strong relations with all progressive and peace-loving forces in the world. Muin Bseiso also exerted great efforts towards deepening relations between progressive writers all over the world.

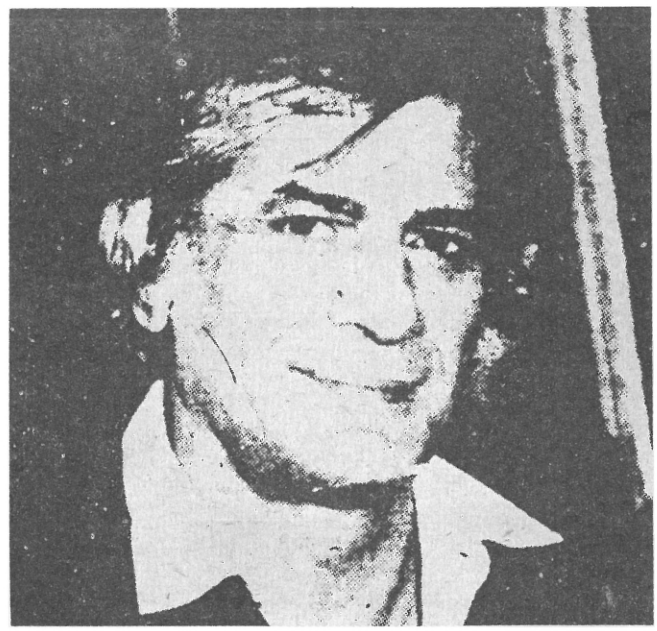
Muin Bseiso was born in Gaza, Palestine, in 1930. In 1947, he joined the National Liberation League (the Arab wing of the Palestine Communist Party). He completed his higher education in Cairo, where he participated in the 1952 demonstrations that led to the overthrow of the monarchy. He worked as a teacher and in the media in Palestine and other Arab countries. While the Zionists briefly occupied the Gaza Strip in 1956, he was imprisoned for being involved in the resistance. He was later to be imprisoned in Egypt, charged with membership in the Egyptian Communist Party. Having been abroad for a period, Bseiso returned to Beirut at the start of the 1982 Israeli siege and directed his revolutionary poems towards the developments of the war.

In 1952, Bseiso published his first collection of poems, entitled "Al Maaraka" (The Battle), to be followed by many others, some of which were later translated into English, German, French and Russian.

Muin Bseiso was also one of the main pioneers in Palestinian theater, and wrote many plays including "The Death of Che Guevara", "Samson and Delila" and "The Black Revolution" He served as assistant editor-in-chief of *Lotus* magazine, published by the Afro-Asian Writers Union, and was honored with the Lotus international prize, as well as with the highest Palestinian medal, the Shield of the Revolution. He was responsible for cultural affairs in the General Secretariat of the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists, and a member of the Palestinian National Council.

Below is a short selection translated from one of Muin Bseiso's poems:

I'll resist,
there's still a white page on this wall
the fingers not yet melted
someone is knocking
a telegram through the wall
now the wires are our veins
veins of these walls
all our blood is shed
it is shedding through these walls
a telegram through the wall
they closed a new cell
they killed a prisoner
they opened a new cell
they brought a new prisoner...



"I do not believe that there is a separation between politics and poetry. The real poet shapes from these two streams his political and poetic existence. He derives themes from his principles and commitment to the cause he serves. The cause of the revolution for Palestinian poets is land, as progressive motifs are for other poets who struggle against military dictatorship to maintain progressive values."

— Muin Bseiso, excerpt from a 1983 interview, reprinted in "Al Fajr".

Descent Into the Water

Palestinian Notes in Arab Exile

Descent into the Water: Palestinian Notes from Arab Exile by Muin Bseiso, is autobiographical in style. Yet Bseiso's purpose was not to tell about himself. Rather through his own experience, he recounts the reality of Palestinian refugee existence, especially in the Gaza Strip, and how Palestinian communists worked among the people, starting in the fifties. The book represents a literary history, packed with expressive metaphors of the Palestinian experience, as well as with much concrete information about the conditions and forms of struggle at that time. In the preface, Bseiso explains that he wrote the book for a specific purpose: to combat the anti-communist sentiment that was on the rise in the Arab world in the late seventies. The book was published in English in 1980, by Medina Press, Wilmette Illinois, USA, as No. 13 in the Arab American University Graduates Monograph Series. We have chosen the following selection because it deals with the first struggles against attempts to resettle the Palestinians, a struggle that has current relevance with the revival of the Israeli efforts in this direction.

I reached Gaza in the summer of 1953 and began to teach English at the Burayj Secondary School which was administered by UNRWA. S.B. and M.N. were like two stalks of wheat in a field of locusts. Together, we formed a cell and began to grow as Communists. We were joined by a worker who mixed powdered milk in water and distributed it among the schoolchildren in the Burayj camp. Later we were joined by another who eventually was fired by UNRWA for refusing to make bricks from soil and grass. He said, "The fabricated stone is more dangerous than the fabricated bank note."

Thus I began teaching English to the children of the Palestinian refugees at the Burayj camp. But I was teaching them a different language.

In the camp the Palestinians who had been expelled from the southern villages hung up their rags and waited to return home to their trees. They began to deceive themselves, though, and planted trees in the camp. They planted vines. But the cluster of grapes in Barbara village is different from that in the Maghazi camp. And the wooden and steel keys which they carried with them from their old homes turned, with the long wait, into nails in their bones.

And they began to talk. The voice of the rags and the wooden key and the cluster of grapes began to rise: A people has been expelled from its land! And the cities and villages have turned into camps! But the refugees banded together. UNRWA tried to eradicate them with water, but in the rain they knew how to turn their bodies into small ships.

They always knew that their enemies were against the Palestinian fingers, fingers that press on the trigger as well as on the chalk stick.

A vegetable box became a blackboard, and with a piece of lime the teachers wrote on the boards they had painted themselves. They began teaching the children, and hope began to spread. When the Palestinian child in the camp - at Burayj, Nusayrat, Maghazi, Arrimal, Jabalya, Rafah, Khan Unis, Deir al-Balah, and Beit Hanoun held a pencil in his hand and made his voice appear on paper, his father felt that the child would someday carry a weapon. The son pressed on the pencil, and the father began to dream of pressing on the trigger.

At the end of the month the teacher received his reward: a bundle of onions and some dried fish.

Egyptian papers began writing about the camps, about the tuberculosis hospital in Burayj and about these Palestinian birds whose necks were like strings. Israeli raids on the camps began. At the same time explorers from UNRWA discovered an island in the midst of the Sinai sand which they saw fit as a place to settle the Gaza refugees.

Thus the first Israeli raid on the Burayj camp took place. When our bus stopped that morning in front of the Burayj Secondary School, the raid was already over: twenty-six dead, dozens wounded, and many homes destroyed.

From the door of the school we marched to the Nusayrat camp, where we stripped the secret police of their weapons. When the peasant women saw us with rifles in our hands, they let out cries of joy.

Together with my students, I entered prison.

"Their blood was heated, so they demonstrated." That was what some moderates said.

"Our fight is not for the camps, but for the Qur'an," others said.

"Let them go free, but keep them away from the schools."

And so I was dismissed from my job. But the Party had begun walking in the camps.

Sheikh 'Izz al-Din, a Muslim Brother who had been excited by the demonstration, gathered the elementary school children and led them in a march from Nusayrat beach to Gaza beach. He was arrested, but the children were left free. They had not yet learned to arrest Palestinian children seven and eight years old. But the Palestinian children, whom the Party had taught to cross from Nusayrat beach to Gaza beach, later began to cross the Jordan River with rifles in hand...

We decided to hold the first conference of Palestinian Communists. The National Liberation Group had become the Jordan Communist party, and those Communists remaining under Israeli occupation had joined Rakah. Palestinian Communists as such only remained in Gaza.

We prepared the Party's program. At the top of it was the derailment of the Sinai project, which Mahmound Fawzi, the foreign minister of Egypt, had agreed to in exchange for a fistful of dollars...

Efforts to carry out the Sinai project intensified. The Agency was supported by some of the mukhtars who wanted to present the eyes of the Palestinian children as boiled eggs to the Egyptian secret police.

The Party and its patriotic friends were given an office across from police headquarters, and there Abdallah Abu Sitta sat under the constant watch of the police. Thus we had to go to the camps.

The Gaza peasant cuts the barbed wire and returns to his fields to sow the wheat. He cuts the barbed wire again at harvest time. He returns with a bundle of wheat stalks and is shot dead on the wire. The next day it is proclaimed that an infiltrator has been killed.

Our first meeting with the peasants took place in the groves of Sheikh Ali Dallul. He had heard about the Burayj demonstration and was interested in the Party. He had brought for entertainment a minstrel with his rabab. In times of trouble they seek the poets, just as some seek God when they ride an airplane.

We began to discuss the Sinai project. To the peasants, the land that is under their feet, which they till, sow, harvest, and smell, is the only land. The peasant is like a cock that crows both when it is hungry and when it is full. And how often he has had to crow from hunger.

The peasants supported a complaint to the military governor against the Sinai project...

Through a friend of the Party we were able to obtain the Sinai Project Report written by the Agency's experts. It was an appalling document. In spite of the Agency's engineers' admission that it would be impossible to live in that piece of hell due to the lack of water and the prohibitive cost of reclaiming the desert, and in spite of the doctors' forecasts of the diseases that would plague the refugees, especially those resulting from the effect of dust-saturated air on the lungs and eyes of the children - in spite of these reservations, the report carried the Agency's experts' approval. They proposed an initial experiment with 20,000 refugees, on the basis of which they would then consider the relocation of additional numbers of refugees.

The Party decided to print the report and to distribute copies of it to all patriotic persons in Gaza. The date we selected was February 15, 1955, at 7 P.M...

In the morning the Intelligence and secret police held a joint meeting. They had not imagined that the report of the Agency's experts would make its way to the Party, and that the latter would translate it, print it, and distribute it. They undertook a vicious search operation. They were not satisfied with turning things upside down; in some homes they dug up floors, and in one home they ripped out tiles in search of the mimeograph machine.

But the machine lay there, beneath a trough filled with water. And the water was dripping, drop by drop, into the trough, as if each drop were a leaflet falling on the cement.

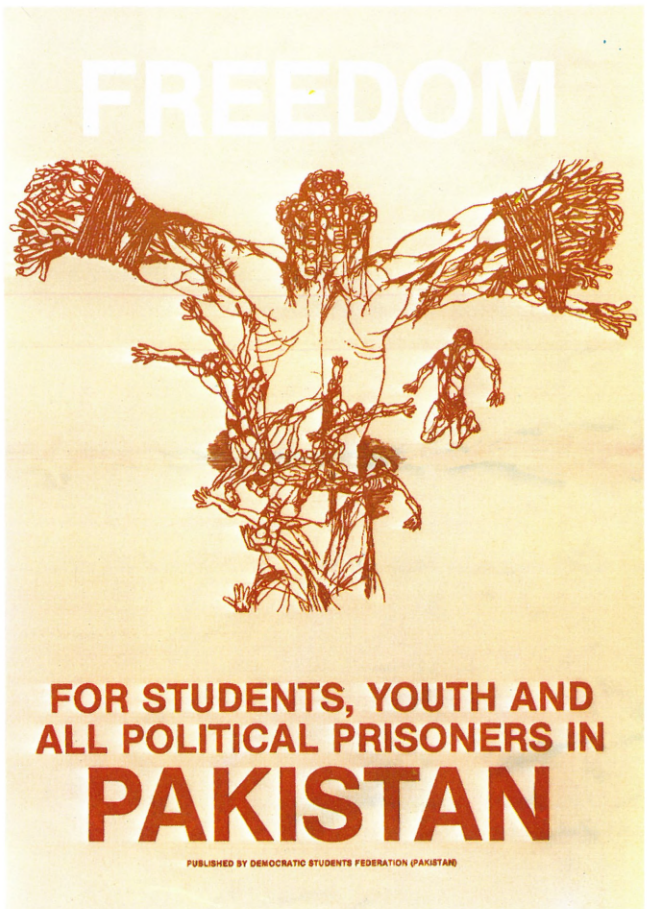
On the night of February 28, 1955, an Israeli raid on the Gaza railroad station took place. And on the morning of March 1, hundreds of thousands, from Rafah to Beit Hanun took to the streets shouting: "No settlement! No relocation! Oh, you American agents!"

They sit on the sidewalks and imagine that they know everything that goes on in the capital. But the masses in Gaza who walked the sidewalks knew what had happened in the Gaza railroad station. Egyptian and Sudanese soldiers had been killed with bayonets, and others had died in the rubble. And the refugees who had demonstrated in the Burayj camp against the Israeli raid there were now demonstrating against the Israeli raid on the railroad station.

It was as if the Israelis wanted to say: There is no one to protect you from the Sinai project. But they were wrong... ●

For Democracy in Pakistan

We were pleased to receive a series of graphics from the Democratic Students Federation (Pakistan), affiliated with the International Union of Students and World Federation of Democratic Youth. We take this opportunity to express our full solidarity with the masses in Pakistan struggling for democracy, and freedom from the oppression of the military dictatorship.



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